



forest

WISDOM

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Focus on Regions: Pacific Coast

In this issue of Forest Wisdom we explore Pacific Coast forests, their history, successes and challenges, and the work of Guild practitioners promoting excellent forestry.



PROTECTING CALIFORNIA'S NORTH COAST *Community Forestry Comes to Redwood Country*

as much as anywhere in the country, California's North Coast redwood forests have been, and still are, defined by the timber wars – battles between environmental and timber interests over forest resources. While activists spiking trees and blocking haul roads are no longer tabloid news in Iowa, the threats affecting redwoods are just as significant today as they were when Julia Butterfly Hill climbed down from the 200 ft. tall "Luna" in 1999 after her marathon 738 day tree-sit. In January of this year, the debt-laden Maxxam/Pacific Lumber Company (on whose lands Luna stood) declared bankruptcy, throwing the fate of 210,000 acres of once well-managed Humboldt County redwood forest into the hands of a Texas bankruptcy court. So the recent news that a different large industrial ownership in Mendocino County, CA had been purchased by a non-profit as a community forest is encouraging news in redwood country.

Despite nearly 20 years of polarization and uncertainty, open-minded environmentalists and progressive-minded timber interests in redwood country had quietly begun coming together to explore common ground in finding ways to preserve the environmental, economic, and social values of the forests they shared. Forester and Forest Guild Founding Member Steve Smith found himself part of those conversations. Although civil dialogue is not often as "newsworthy" as conflict, the participants found through continued interaction

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Steve Smith

A founding member of the Guild, Steve's groundbreaking work in California's redwood country is featured in our cover story. He is currently the Mendocino County District Conservationist for the Natural Resource Conservation Service.



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Dear Forest Guild Members and Supporters,

In June, the Forest Guild's Board of Directors took several actions reflecting satisfaction with the Guild's transition of leadership from Henry Carey to myself, and asked that I report these developments to you.

I am now reporting directly to the Guild's Board (prior, I reported to Henry). Henry will continue working for the Guild on a part-time basis, focusing on a few select projects and development efforts. His new job title is "Senior Forester." The board also offered Henry a seat, which he accepted, on the Guild's Board as "founder and lifetime member." These developments are great for the Guild in many ways because it enables Henry's expertise, institutional memory, good nature, and 20-plus years of relationships to remain assets for the Forest Guild.

At this historic time for the Guild, it is important to recognize the decades of dedication and contributions made by Henry to improving the practice and application of forestry and the well-being of our forests and the communities that depend upon them. Henry's ideas and experimentation have helped shape the fields of community forestry and restoration forestry and have had far-reaching impact on forest policies and practices. His vision is matched by meticulous organizational skills, both of which have been essential in creating the Forest Guild and leaving it poised for continued success in the future. Personally, even though it's only been a short time, I recognize Henry as one of the great mentors and colleagues I've had the pleasure to work with, and I know many others feel the same way.

During this transition, Guild staff, board, and members have undertaken a number of planning and fundraising activities, the results of which will become more visible over the next six months through increased programs and member events. Be on the lookout for these exciting developments:

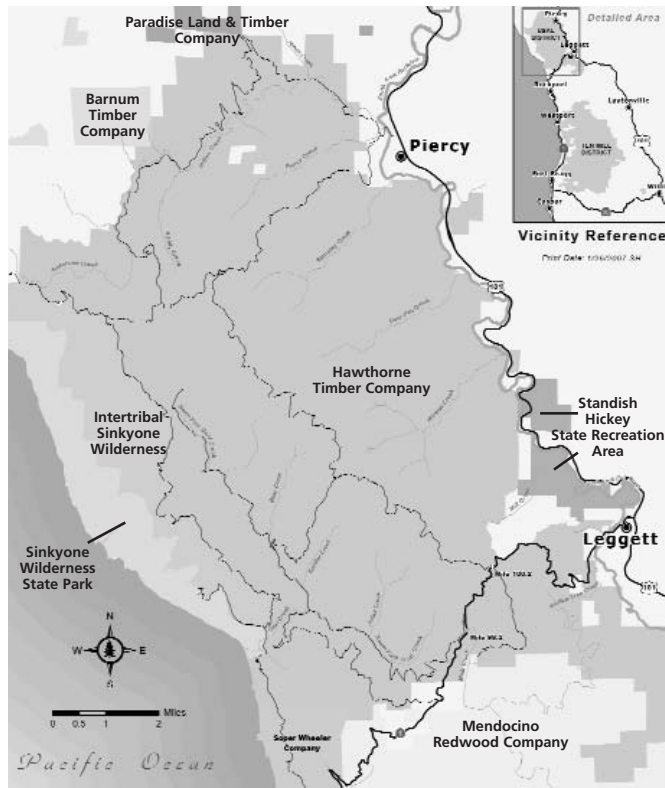
- Re-launch of the Model Forest Program – designation of new forests, improved web presence, and at least one annual event at each model forest coordinated with other Guild programs.
- Expansion of the Ecological Forestry Initiative (see forestguild.org/ecological_forestry.html).
- Regional meetings with field tours in Vermont, North Carolina, and Washington State in fall 2007, and in the Great Lakes region in the first half of 2008. Our next national meeting will be held in the Southeast in fall 2008.
- Expansion of our Northeast Region Director's position to full-time (September 2007), with regional expansion efforts stepping up next in the Pacific West region.
- Continued success of our Southwest region's efforts to build forest management capacity in land-based communities, restore ecological processes, and support multiple forest values.
- Launch of the Guild's Climate Change Initiative (see July/Aug. *Across the Landscape*).
- Launch of the Guild's campus outreach efforts to connect students with Guild members and principles and to build student membership (see July/Aug. *Across the Landscape*).
- Revisions of the Guild's website so that it is up-to-date, easier to maintain, and fosters greater dialogue among Guild members.
- Release of the Guild's revised Strategic Plan and Northeast Program Plan.

It is exciting for me to be a part of the Guild—and to work with our members, staff, and partners—as we move forward in promoting excellent forestry, serving the field forester, and influencing policies affecting our forests and forest-dependent communities.

Sincerely,

Howard Gross
Executive Director

Hawthorne Timberlands: Usal District



The Usal Forest (shown as Hawthorne Timber Company on the map) adjoins Mendocino Redwood Company lands to the south.

- Hawthorne Timber Company
- Barnum Timber Company
- Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness
- Mendocino Redwood Company
- Paradise Land and Timber
- Sinkyone Wilderness State Park
- Soper Wheeler Company
- Standish Hickey State Recreation Area
- Main Streams
- Highways
- Main Roads

USAL FOREST – Conservation Plan Restrictions on Forestry:

- Compliance with California Forest Practice Rules and total maximum daily load for the relevant impaired water bodies.
- Limit timber harvest volume removals to not more than 3 percent of standing inventory volume on an annual average basis over a 10 year period.
- Minimum harvest age for even-age regeneration harvests set at 50 or 60 years.
- Provide a buffer of at least 60' on either side of class III streams with at least 50% canopy retention.
- Even-aged regeneration harvests permanently retain 15% (by area or basal area) post harvest.

For more details on the Redwood Forest Foundation go to www.rffi.org

that they could actually envision a similar future. One outgrowth of that convergence was the formation of the Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI) – a non-profit organization whose mission is to create a model of working community forests by purchasing and sustainably managing forests within the redwood region.

In June 2007, RFFI moved one step closer to its vision of local forests sustainably managed for the benefit of local communities when the foundation closed on the purchase of the 50,635 acre Usal Redwood Forest in Mendocino County immediately north of the Mendocino Redwood Company's Rockport Inventory Block near Leggett, CA. The parties to the transaction believe it is the country's first forest acquisition by a nonprofit using 100 percent private capital. The \$65 million in financing needed to purchase the property from the Hawthorne Timber Company was arranged by the Bank of America (BOA) as part of its \$20 billion Environmental Initiative. BOA provided RFFI with a non-traditional, "patient financing", 20-year term designed to provide for a "baseline" of conservation management and economic benefits, with harvest levels well within the limits of the forest's capability and current condition.

The property will remain under the continued management of the Campbell Group (the managing entity under Hawthorne's ownership), and will be guided by a detailed conservation plan approved by RFFI with input from a multi-disciplinary team of advisors. With Smith's involvement RFFI has adopted the Forest Guild Principles, together with the Forest Stewardship Council's Pacific Regional Standards, as formal guidance within the property's conservation plan. One unique element of the financing agreement actually commits RFFI to adhering to the conservation plan, including staying within established maximum harvest levels (see sidebar) – an unusual provision for a lender!

A chief concern for forests in California's North Coast region is conversion due to development pressures and the continuing explosion of vineyards. The Usal property valuation reflected those trends. As a result, an important component of financial viability of the deal, and RFFI's ability to practice sustainable forestry, will be the sale of the forest's development rights. RFFI has entered into a letter of intent with the



SENESCENCE IN THE WILLAPA HILLS
*Adapted from “Wintergreen:
Rambles in a Ravaged Land”*

By Robert Michael Pyle

(Originally published 1986, Scribner; 2001, Sasquatch Books. Reprinted with permission of the author and Sasquatch Books from the 2001 edition.)

Editor’s Note: The Willapa Hills, rising to 3,110 feet above sea level, are part of southwest Washington’s Coast Range, situated between the Olympic Mountains to the north and the Columbia River to the south. The forests there, dominated by Douglas fir, Western Red Cedar, and Sitka spruce were long considered among the finest conifer forests in the world. Today only about one-half of one percent of Willapa’s old-growth forests still stand. Essentially, all of this extremely productive and diversity-rich landscape has been devoted to intensive forest management over the last century, leaving an entire geographic region of the state without any significant forest conservation reserve.

“Wintergreen: Rambles in a Ravaged Land” was written before some of the most sensational controversies in the Pacific Northwest timber wars had occurred, but when the effects of a collapsing timber economy were already being felt.

a climax forest exists in a senescent state, where aging and rot roughly balance, or may even overtake for a time, regeneration. I suppose it is the mistaken idea of very old-growth forest aging toward ultimate rot that gave rise to that silliness about “overmature forests.”

We know, of course, that climax forests age like good brandy – they just get better. In the fullness of time, natural factors open glades and thus prospects for successors. Forests did manage to replace themselves, somehow, before the advent of modern forestry.

You have to look hard to find anything approaching a climax forest in Willapa, the four thousand year-old Long Island cedar grove perhaps being the only example. But a different sort of senescence is much more apparent, everywhere you look around here in fact. That is the senescence of a culture.

I think the most striking demonstration of senescence comes from a comparison of the present with the pretenses of the settlers. Old photos in Carlton Appelo’s telephone books or in the museums show men in suits and women in broad hats, bustles, and all manner of lacy finery, posing in front of huge whitewashed new stores and hotels, on the decks of the daily packet steamers from Astoria or Portland, perched on immense stumps of old-growth firs, or, stiffly, standing on the porches of New England-steeped white churches.

Little if any of this may be found today. The trappings of genteel society preserved precariously on the forests’ edge bespoke something more than late-Victorian fashion. Along with the many theaters, newspapers, schools, churches, lodges, civic and cultural organizations, they spoke of hope. High expectations. An intent to create the culture they knew in Stockholm, Helsinki or Chicago here in the Great North Woods. It’s not that nothing of this remains, but that it has contracted as to give one an overwhelming feeling of its being well past bloom.

Just one heading will give an idea of the pathetic optimism that beat in every heart in the Willapa of 1910: “South Bend – The Baltimore of the Pacific.” The founders had good reason to be optimistic about growth. The seemingly unlimited supplies of timber, water, power, oysters, fish, farmland, and other resources promised no end of opportunity for expansion. In 1910 the city of Raymond, Washington had a payroll larger in proportion to its population than any other city on the Pacific Coast.

Robert Michael Pyle
is a professional author, essayist, and ecologist. His work frequently appears in *Orion* magazine. Among many credentials, he holds a Ph.D. from Yale University’s School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. In 1971, during a Fulbright Fellowship at the Monks Wood Experimental Station in England, Pyle founded the Xerces Society for invertebrate conservation, and later chaired its Monarch Project. In 1997 he received a Distinguished Service Award from the Society for Conservation Biology.

How could they have foreseen the mill closures and chronic, acute unemployment that lay in wait three-quarters of a century later? Opera houses and dance halls situated in remote logging towns displayed the people's unwillingness to be without amenities they considered proper to civilization, as well as their belief that true civilization would surely arrive if only they made it so.

But the big timber ran out.

A more conservative expenditure of the resource base might have permitted a longer wave in the cycle of growth, and a few more of the dreams might have come true. Even if the second-growth timber had been fostered in the fifties, instead of being cropped more intensively than before, the forest products industry might



still be on its feet in Willapa. In any case the boom bust, and now senescence reigns. To all appearances, Willapa is going back to nature rapidly.

One of the difficult things for people to realize is that senescence is not all bad. In ecological terms senescence must precede regeneration. All

communities must senesce in order to be renewed. Renewal can occur continually in a climax state, as in the Long Island Cedar grove or in New York City; or it can take place episodically, as following a forest fire or a bad recession.

A mature rural economy, like that of England prior to World War II, is one in which senescence and regrowth occur together: a kind of a climax state of the countryside and its settlements. Willapa never had a chance to get there, or to come even close. Instead it followed another classic pattern in ecology: boom and crash. It is an uncomfortable way to go; it hurts people and their pride. But it leaves open the door for stability next time through a different model than the one that created the crash.

What we want then, is to develop a kind of permaculture. This term was coined in 1975 by Australian landscape ecologist Bill Mollison. It describes a state of "sustainable land use within the context of a sustainable and humane culture." Mollison believes this can be accomplished on different scales, by "designing ecosystems that are food and energy producing while conserving of resources and wildlife habitat." If ever there was a place in need of permaculture, it is Willapa today.

Richard Mabey described such a state, once prevalent in the English rural landscape, in his book *In a Green Shade*. "There is a sense in which a settled rural landscape - whose patterns of fields, farms, and churches embodies the history of a hundred generations - is a vision of Eden, no matter what temptation and toil lie behind it." Willapa, with only four or five generations under its belt and running down fast, has a long way to go toward such an ideal. There is poverty in the high-yield forest. We may never get there. But if we should, the rewards would be great.

Whether all else changes, stays the same, or just fades away, the seasons at least are immutable. Of all four, the green winter here makes the deepest impression through the sheer persistence of its pervasive, dripping, rising and falling damp. The rivers flood across the valleys, and the buffleheads and mew gulls settle in, as mists descend into shaggy hemlocks, and pale green lichen seems to swaddle the world against all danger. Green drips into deeper green. This is winter in Willapa, where the pelting rain brings the promise of recovery to the bruised hills. Later, when the washing relents, the brighter shades of spring green always arrive.

Will the people be refreshed, along with the used-up year and the ravaged land? Maybe, maybe not. But at least the seasons will survive. And I suspect Willapa will as well. ■

The vintage black and white photos are from the Lantern Slide Collection at Yale's Global Institute of Sustainable Forestry.



“One of the difficult things for people to realize is that senescence is not all bad.”

What remains of an old splash dam on the Big River.



LONG TERM FORESTRY MANAGEMENT

Restoring the Redwoods - Part II

By Mike Jani

Mike Jani is a Guild Professional Member, Chief Forester, and Vice President of the Mendocino Redwood Company which owns a 23,000 acre Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified forest. Mike began working for Mendocino in 1999.

Editor's Note: The Spring 2002 Issue of "Distant Thunder" (#12) included Part I of Mike Jani's story about the Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC). <http://publications.theforestrust.org/download/pdf/DT12.pdf> www.forestguild.org

Not Quite Ancient History

Much of the industrial timberlands in California's coastal redwood belt have been in continuous management since the first sawmill in Mendocino County, the California Lumber Manufacturing Company, was operated by Jerome Ford and E.C. Williams in 1852. Just as in other regions, early exploitation of the timber resource began near water, starting at the coast, then working up the rivers, utilizing splash dams and heavy winter rains to move the narrow thread of shoreline timber down to the mouths of the rivers where the sawmills were located. From there lumber was loaded on sailing schooners and transported down the coast to fuel the construction of San Francisco and Los Angeles when these towns boomed with the

onset of California's Gold Rush. As the "easy" timber ran out, steam donkeys and later railroads pushed further into the upper reaches of the watersheds. As a result of the continuing push to get out the timber, it is estimated that in the narrow coastal tread of the redwood region today, only about 2% of the old growth forest remains, and most of that is in public ownership with protected status.

The "management objective" in the 19th and early 20th centuries was always the same: clearcut the desirable conifer species - redwood and Douglas fir - while leaving behind hardwoods such as tan-oak (not a true oak, but related to the chestnut), live oak, bay and Madrone¹. This regime resulted in largely even-aged stands, with heavy hardwood composition and few older trees save for the outlaw trees which could not physically be cut with the logging tools of the day.

¹ Madrone (*arbutus menziesii*) is native to the Pacific coast from northern California to British Columbia. In decline over the past 20 years, the Madrone is a broad-leaved evergreen which can reach a height of 75 feet, has an average lifespan of 200 years, and is known for its striking exfoliating red bark and crooked trunk.

Restoring the Redwoods, continued on page 10

INNOVATIVE FORESTRY

Forestry and Restoration Contracting Firm Offers Suite of Holistic Forestry Services

Questions and Answers with Guild Member Darin Stringer



Pile burning of small diameter material as part of IRM's white oak restoration project in Oregon's Umpqua Valley.



Q. When was Integrated Resource Management (IRM) founded?

A. IRM was founded in 1994 by Marc Barnes. I joined in 1999. We currently are partners, each owning half the company. In the early days, IRM was primarily doing large-scale public lands inventory projects, and cruising work, but both our interests centered more on forest restoration and conservation-oriented forest management. We still do about half our business in forest inventory, cruising, and resource assessment work. Our goal is to have about 1/3 of our business coming from each of our core service areas: 1) inventory and assessment, 2) woodland management, and 3) habitat restoration/fuel reduction.

Q. Can you describe the places and landscapes where IRM works?

A. We work predominantly in the Pacific Northwest, though we have completed projects in Florida, Alaska, Utah, New Mexico, and Montana. Forest settings include temperate coastal rainforests of the Pacific Northwest (PNW), intermountain and southwest pine and mixed conifer types, and PNW oak communities. The bulk of our work is in the Willamette Valley, from Eugene to Portland, OR.

Q. Who are your typical clients? What is it about IRM that makes you unique?

A. Our client list includes public land management agencies (federal, state, and local), tribal forestry, and progressive non-industrial private landowners such as family forests and land trusts. On the private side, we cater to landowners who value ecosystem management that is flexibly applied according to their needs. On the public side, we have built a reputation completing large-scale inventory projects, consulting on innovative approaches to restoration design and implementation, and as contractors providing restoration implementation services.

Many clients value our full range of forestry services which we integrate under a banner of holistic forestry. We have worked hard to establish a reputation as foresters more interested in what we are leaving than what we remove, and focused on restoring and maintaining ecological integrity and function of the forest as opposed to a more traditional and extractive focus.

Darin Stringer Interview, continued on page 12

Darin Stringer

is a Forest Guild Professional member since 2005 and Co-owner of IRM in Philomath, OR. Darin has an M.S. in Silviculture and Forest Ecology from Oregon State University. More information on IRM Forestry is available at www.irmforestry.com.



Building destroyed near South Lake Tahoe, California by the Angora Fire - June 25th, 2007.

CALIFORNIA'S FOREST POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Affecting the Health of our Forests and Forest Economies

By Bill Stewart

Bill Stewart

is a Forest Guild Professional member and Forestry Specialist with the University of California Cooperative Extension.

The Golden State of Regulation

California's majestic forests have provided the impetus for forest protection policies since President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill granting Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias to the State of California as an inalienable public trust in 1864. On private lands, California was one of the nation's early adopters of forester licensing and forest practices legislation. In addition to forest-specific policies and regulations, we also have state-level water quality, air quality, wildlife habitat, and now global warming policies and regulations to add to the complexity facing forest managers and owners. And at the community level, regulations designed to promote the open space attributes of private forests are often added to the mix.

While the public logically assumes that the sum of all these policies and regulations will be to protect and ensure the health of forests, there are signs suggesting that the costs of complying with excessive regulation may be siphoning away resources that could otherwise be applied to higher-quality forest stewardship.

Development of forest regulations and policies in California have been dominated by concerns over the practices of large industrial timber owners and the USDA Forest Service (USFS). Landowning entities with a large acreage base and full-time staff can usually bear the costs of regulation within reason. But nearly half of the private forests in California are owned by approximately 40,000 families or other partnerships, with ownerships ranging from 50 to 1,000 acres. Those owners can pursue forest stewardship options that are within their goals and budgets – or they can leave the forest management “marketplace” and edge into the rapidly expanding market for forested residential real estate. And after a few decades of relatively slow growth there are many indications that the forested real estate market is now heating up in all but the most remote parts of the state.

From the fog-filled redwood coast to dry interior canyons where intense wind-driven fires are a common occurrence, appropriate forest stewardship strategies vary tremendously within the landscape and between different ownership

types. When the California Forest Practices Act was first adopted in 1973, long time consulting forester and Guild member Jim Able of Eureka, California pointed out that “it was often the first time non-industrial forest landowners were exposed to professional foresters, and the first time they may have received suggestions on how to improve their forests.”

After thirty years experience with the legislation however, foresters are often considered the bearer of bad news to prospective clients as they describe the documentation and permitting requirements for issues such as stream crossings, ocean going fish, and water quality goals that may be needed to implement a forestry project – all in addition to basic professional forestry advice. In many cases, the total cost of complying with required public processes and permits



Sudden Oak Death close-up showing bleeding symptoms. Photo by Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

can run into the tens of thousands of dollars. When these additional costs cannot be covered by revenue from sustainable harvests and measurable improvements to the forest property, many landowners begin thinking more seriously about converting their forestland to alternative uses.

Impacts on Human Safety and Forest Health

The recent (June 2007) Angora Fire near Lake Tahoe that swept through more than 3,000 acres of national forest and forested subdivisions

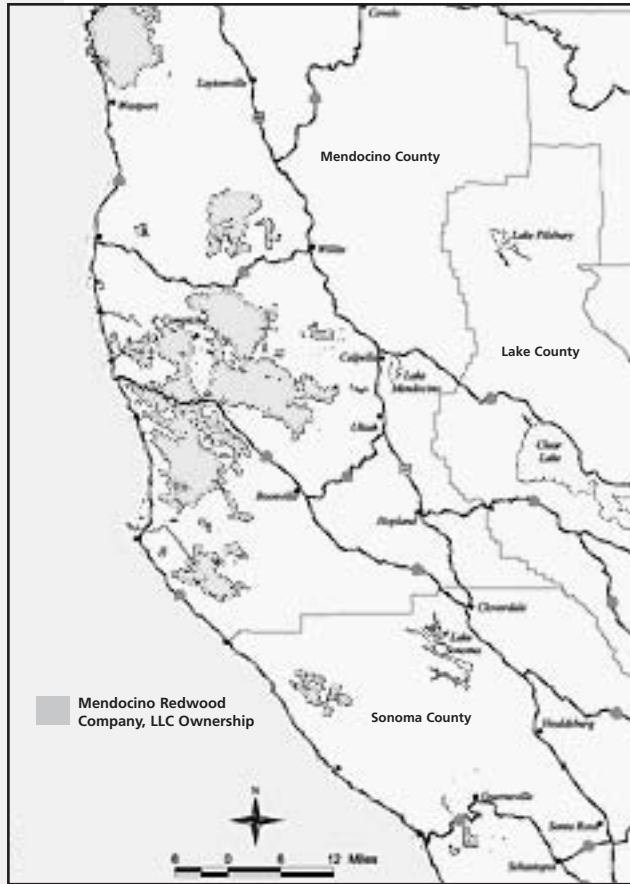
- destroying 242 residences and 67 commercial structures - illustrates the danger of not addressing forest health risks at a scale big enough to make a difference. Certainly dry and windy conditions increase the ability of forests to carry fires, but here as elsewhere, owner preferences for a verdant landscape and rules designed to protect water quality left a landscape significantly at risk of fire that will now take decades to recover. California has a preponderance of locations in the urban/rural interface with similar mixes of working forests and residential areas where appropriate forest management and fire protection treatments have yet to be designed and carried out. While society would seem to have a compelling interest in maintaining fire-safe forests, California's regulatory environment may be doing little to help address the threat. While fire risks dominate the discussion of our interior forests, forest health risks in coastal forests can also expand without appropriate forest management. For example, invasive species such as the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*, known to be the cause of the Sudden Oak Death (SOD) disease, has only impacted a small percentage of the susceptible landscape of California, and has already left behind a million dead oak trees in its wake. Field trials are suggesting that the risk of SOD transmission can be reduced by targeted removal or management of some key host species, and by prescribed burning. Expanding these practices from a few sites to the scale needed to achieve a more resilient landscape requires individual forestry plans be filed (and funded) for a large number of landowners, as well as the funds needed to carry them out.

In many cases involving fire safety or forest health, the forests at risk are not managed primarily for wood production. But even small properties would have the ability to essentially self-finance forest health improvements through sustainable timber harvesting if the current permitting costs did not squeeze out the small amount of revenues such projects could generate. This is especially true for the many forest parcels that have high value species such as redwood and ponderosa pine.

CA's Forest Policies and Regulations, continued on page 13

“...the costs of complying with excessive regulation may be siphoning away resources that could otherwise be applied to higher quality forest stewardship.”

Mendocino Redwood Company's current ownership.



Despite the fact that the redwood forest is one of, if not, the most productive forests in the world, by the fourth quarter of the 20th century lands capable of carrying in excess of 150,000 board feet of timber per acre had been depleted to stocking levels as low as 10,000 board feet/acre. Faced with the reality of a “busted” resource, and with the boom of opportunity beckoning in the Southeastern United States, companies like Georgia Pacific and Louisiana Pacific (L-P) put their redwood lands on the auction block, where much of it found its way into the hands of private investors - either family ownerships or timber real estate trusts.

Enter the Mendocino Redwood Company

MRC is a family owned forest of 229,000 acres located mostly in Mendocino County, more or less in the middle of the narrow strip of land along California’s North Coast that defines the redwood region. This property was purchased from L-P in 1998 as a long term investment. While virtually every square inch of the property had been harvested repeatedly at the time of

acquisition, the new owners made a commitment to restore the forest and to adopt the management standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for the Pacific Coast Region. Our operating premise has always been that MRC could be a profitable business while sustainably managing the lands over a long term. We have never moved away from this goal, although meeting it has sometimes proven to be a challenge.

Along with a depleted land base, MRC inherited a deep distrust of corporate timber owners held by local environmental activist groups. The political climate around redwood lands in 1998 was such that these organizations had found the only way to stop or slow the mining of the forest resource was in the courts. Groups like the Redwood Coast Watershed Alliance have consistently held our feet to the fire over our obligations to state and federal laws. Our challenge was to set a new path, stick to it, and convince these groups by our actions that things really had changed.

On taking over management of the property our first decision was to figure out what we had really purchased! Was the standing inventory what it was advertised as at the auction? Where was the merchantable timber that would support our operation while the forest re-grew? How would we establish relations with a skeptical group of environmentalists who watched our every move? And how would we move ahead in the stifling regulatory atmosphere that defines forest management in the wonderful State of Confusion? (I meant California) Our engagement with FSC certification for example has helped us to better identify management needs, and was the trigger for our investment in more intense inventory, planning, and re-adjustment of our silvicultural approaches. We recognize both the value of these relationships, and the amount of time and energy required to maintain them.

Another tool that has proven helpful in demonstrating transparency to our partners has been our ability to model future forest conditions through the development of a spatially explicit landscape plan. This modeling tool has allowed us to show over time (given

“...we’ve gained ideas that we can use to successfully balance the bottom line with the restoration of the forest and the habitats of the various animals dependent upon it.”

*A Historical
Perspective*

the management constraints we have placed upon ourselves to achieve our FSC certification) how the lands will respond. For example, in our management plans we have provided for a very low and metered thinning of our riparian forest zones to focus on fisheries restoration, and the protection of our populations of Coho salmon, Chinook salmon and Steelhead trout, species that are listed as threatened or endangered. We have adopted a similarly conservative approach for many of our listed terrestrial species: spotted owls, marbled murrelets, red-tailed frogs, and mountain beavers. Although habitat protection for these species has further constrained our management of the upland forest, protecting or restoring key habitat for these species, and modeling the results, has allowed us to create a long-term plan for the forest that is believable and relatively easy for non-foresters to understand. Being able to communicate these plans and future outcomes in maps as well as in narrative has immeasurably helped our credibility.

MRC looks to the future

As we planned for the future of MRC, we looked at our few remnant areas of old growth to get some idea of natural patterns and dynamics in an un-managed redwood forest. As part of that effort we identified and protected from harvest approximately 105 acres in 6 "never-harvested" old growth stands, as well as some 12,000 residual old growth trees within previously harvested forests spread across the property. Clearly, managing an industrial forest will fall short of recreating the forest that existed prior to human intervention; the climax coastal redwood forest can be 2000 years old. But we've gained ideas that we can use to successfully balance the bottom line with the restoration of the forest and the habitats of the various animals dependent upon it.

In fact MRC made the decision in the fall of 1998 to eliminate traditional clearcutting from our lands. Instead, our management - in stands where we have appropriate conifer stocking - consists of a series of selection thinnings, each twenty years apart, and culminates with what we term a regeneration selection which is nothing more than another thinning with a few

group selections thrown in to restart at least a portion of the stand. (Editor's Note: MRC silviculture was covered in more detail in Part I.)

We've also performed a detailed and comprehensive road inventory that now helps shape the planning (and timing) of harvesting activities across our ownership, allowing us to focus harvest first where the most high priority restoration work is needed to restore riparian habitat. Coupled with this and in response to the FSC mandated protection and enhancement of High Conservation Value forests, we've reserved some productive areas for purposes other than timber production. Those acres still produce timber, but the focus is on habitat improvement with a more marked shift towards a late seral state forest.

In an effort to coordinate all of our planning, and satisfy the regulatory requirements of state and federal agencies, MRC is developing a combined State and Federal Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan and a long-term timber management plan that will fulfill our permitting requirements from the California Department of Forestry to commercially harvest timber, and from our Regional Water Control Board to allow for non-point source wastewater discharge.

We are optimistic that these plans will be completed in 2008, and our foresters and biologists will be able to spend more time out implementing projects on our lands which is why we all went into the forestry business! ■

**John Muir -
Candidate Guild Member?**

John Muir's conservation philosophy matured while working in Yosemite Valley from 1869-1871. Muir, in fact, operated a small sawmill near Yosemite Falls to lumber wind-felled trees. Not until 1892, however, did he become one of the founding members of the Sierra Club to save America's last wilderness.

"It was lumber from the Mendocino Saw Mills (later re-named the Mendocino Lumber Company), that helped materially to rebuild San Francisco after its many conflagrations in the [1850s]. It was the Mendocino Saw Mills that had what is claimed to have been the first railroad in California - a mile track over which oxen pulled carloads of lumber from the mill up to the chute on the Point. It was the Mendocino Saw Mills that provided the first cargoes of lumber for the little two-masted schooners which became so much a part of the life and the history of the Mendocino Coast. And it was the Mendocino Saw Mills that founded the town of Mendocino and made it for years the most important shipping center and community on the whole Mendocino Coast. (Ryder, 57) ."

- David Warren Ryder, from "Memories of the Mendocino Coast, San Francisco, CA" Privately Printed, 1948.

For some government agencies, the value they have found in IRM has been in our innovative approaches to tackling complex forest restoration projects. Examples include devising approaches to remove trees in wetlands around rare plant populations, applying cut to length technology to habitat restoration, and increasing wood utilization to offset carbon.

Q. Describe some of your services, how you decide what services to offer, and which projects to take on.

A. Our vision is to offer the full suite of services necessary to practice holistic forestry, with flexibility to conduct operations on projects from 20 to 20,000 acres. Our list of services can be a bit daunting to coordinate as an owner



IRM staff in the field.

because there is so much constant change in methods and technologies. But it is a challenge we enjoy and take pride and inspiration from.

Our services include: cruising; forest inventory; plant community mapping; fuels assessments, stumpage appraisals and forest investment analysis; fire behavior and effects modeling; growth and yield and habitat suitability modeling; sustainable yield analysis; management and restoration planning documents; harvest design, layout, and supervision; and native plant community restoration using fire, herbicide, and seeding methods.

Our work must meet our code of forestry ethics, which is quite simple in concept and

tiered off the teachings of Aldo Leopold. We have passed up lucrative forestry contracts that didn't pass our ethical screens.

Q. Ecological restoration work is labor intensive and does not generate revenues for clients. How does the market support that kind of work?

A. Almost everywhere you look, the forest is in need of ecosystem investment. The need for thoughtful and "input-based" forestry crosses ownership patterns, but this is a difficult sell in our short-term, return driven world. We are fortunate in a sense, since we are dealing with a small subset of landowners who understand the value in the management approaches we offer. The greater challenge is in designing restoration treatments without thorough knowledge on outcomes and effects. We practice forestry in an era of information overload, yet we still lack much of the information we need to restore forest ecosystems to a high degree of functionality.

Another challenge is finding funding for restorative forestry. We spend a lot of time staying current on grant opportunities and developing partnerships with NGOs. We also work hard to squeeze value out of the by-products our restoration provides, which are generally small diameter material and low-value hardwoods.

Q. What skills do you look for in your professional staff? How do you maintain employee efficiency and company profitability when providing so many different services?

A. Finding staff to do the kind of thoughtful forestry we practice is perhaps the biggest challenge in this business. We seek workers with a passion for progressive forestry and with an ingrained land ethic. It's interesting that we have successful employees who started with good "hard skills" but lacking in progressive forestry thinking, and those with strong environmental ethics but lacking in forestry skills. Other skills we seek include a high level of organization, the ability to work independently and as a team, and the flexibility to roll with changes.

It is a challenge to remain profitable when offering so many services, perhaps similar to a

“We are bound by our duties, first and foremost to the forest and the future generations that we pass these resources off to. While we have lost clients in upholding these high standards, it has empowered us, and is a source of strength and pride that emanates through our employees.”

restaurant with a big menu. We do so out of passion and interest in the spectrum of tools needed to practice holistic forestry. Being able to run wildlife habitat suitability and fire behavior models, while also knowing the operational details of commercial thinning and different mill sorts are imperative in the business niche we are filling. The commitment to learning is something we strongly encourage with our staff by offering paid time to do trainings and workshops.

Q. What is your vision for working forests and conservation lands in your region? Are the Guild Mission and Principles relevant and consistent with that vision?

A. Our company philosophy focuses on providing society with working examples to guide the eventual co-existence of modern society with productive forests. We define productive well beyond fiber to include the full range of forest functions provided by the reference forest.

The Forest Guild mission and principles are consistent with the philosophical framework of our company. We are bound by our duties, first and foremost to the forest and the future generations that we pass these resources off to. While we have lost clients in upholding these high standards, it has empowered us, and is a source of strength and pride that emanates through our employees. ■

CA's Forest Policies and Regulations, continued from page 9

Impacts on local forest economies

In the short term, new forest regulations may produce a jump in forest-based planning as new plans must be filed, and changes to existing plans must be implemented by owners already committed to management. In the longer-term however, California is seeing a downward trend in the number of new forestry projects filed as the higher costs of compliance reduce the levels of investment that owners are willing to make. In communities economically dependent on forestry, this effect can ultimately lead to small forest-based enterprises and businesses shrinking, moving, or simply shutting down. For family forest owners, complying with regulations raises the cost of all types of forest management activities, and those projects that may have been marginal to begin with never get done. In these situations forest health risks will likely increase, even though they could otherwise have been addressed with investments financed from sustainable forestry revenues.

Where do we go from here?

Practitioners are finding their own methods for reducing costs associated with regulations. California forester and Guild member Greg Blomstrom, for example, is developing a single forest management plan for multiple private

forest landowners in the same watershed. In addition to documenting all the costs of the different permits, his team is also laying out an integrated management approach based on a single environmental planning document. Hopefully, the results will quantify the cost savings of streamlining the regulatory process, and demonstrate the value of focusing more energy in the forest.

Although California can continue to import most of its lumber needs, it cannot export its fire risk or its invasive species risks. If small and medium sized working forests are going to be as financially viable as other forms of real estate in the expanding residential region of California, they will need to spend less on filling out forms so that they can invest more in site-specific management plans that will produce a sustainable mix of products and services.

According to George D. Gentry, executive officer of the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, "We spend far too much on process and documentation and not enough on actions on the ground. We need to move away from our heavy rule-based system to performance-based structures where licensed foresters and loggers face real penalties for sub-standard work and get rewarded for quality implementation." ■



MEMBERSHIP

Professional Membership in the Forest Guild is open to all forest professionals whose work is directly related to the stewardship and protection of forests, whether that work occurs through on-the-ground management, policy, advocacy, or research.

Other individuals who share a concern for forests and forestry are invited to participate as **Supporting or Sustaining Members.**

Students are also encouraged to join and become involved.

JOIN TODAY
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RFFI members survey the south fork of the Usal River.

Conservation Fund, an environmental non-profit specializing in land protection, to negotiate a conservation easement through California's Proposition 84 - Clean Water, Parks and Coastal Protection program. The easement will prohibit development on the property and enhance conservation practices. And since even

“green” lenders need to get paid, the sale of development rights will help pay down RFFI's obligation to a level where timber production can provide sufficient cash flow to service the debt under conservative management. Once the loans are paid, net revenues from timber production will be used to fund other conservation projects and provide economic returns to the local community. RFFI and its partners believe this financing is a model for raising private capital that provides community development and environmental benefits.

While protection of a large working redwood forest threatened by fragmentation was a significant conservation achievement in itself, the Usal is also a coastal property, adjacent to existing state parks and coastal forests of the Wailaki tribe. “The Usal Forest is the backyard of the Mattole headwaters, Sanctuary Forest and the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park,” said Eric Goldsmith, Executive Director of Sanctuary Forest. “It's a huge gift that this property is now spared from the pressures of potential subdivision, and will remain as forestland in perpetuity.” The Usal property is part of a high priority salmonid fish conservation area, and supports an abundance of threatened and endangered plant and animal species habitat. The ability to protect these attributes should add to RFFI's ability to leverage other public and private sources of support for the project and ensure that their goals for careful management can be achieved.

One of the most unique aspects of the Usal Redwood Forest project is RFFI's commitment to the concept of a “working community forest.” RFFI's mission is to protect and manage forestlands and other related resources in the Redwood Region for the long-term benefit of local communities. A challenge facing RFFI is engaging local community members in a process which allows for meaningful input into how the property will be managed and provides for transparency in decision making. This local involvement, a fundamental tenet of community forestry, is reflected in RFFI's Mission Statement and guiding principles. RFFI's leaders believe that how well they succeed in their goal of active community involvement in the Usal Forest will strongly influence the overall success of the project.



After years of more aggressive management, much of the Usal Forest is dominated by young conifers mixed with tanoak and other hardwoods.

Having seen a career's worth of conflict and gridlock over redwoods, Smith, who has been involved in RFFI since its origins, believes the Usal Forest project represents an promising alternative model for resource management. “This project is about empowering a community. In the bigger picture, where the world seems so much out of people's control, this is about citizens taking control at the local level of the things that most influence their lives.” ■

“It's a huge gift that this property is now spared from the pressures of potential subdivision, and will remain as forestland in perpetuity.”



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MISSION

The Forest Guild promotes ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the welfare of human communities dependent upon them. The Guild provides training, policy analysis, and research to foster excellence in stewardship, to support practicing foresters and allied professionals, and to engage a broader community in the challenges of forest conservation and management.

join today

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forest **WISDOM**

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Howard Gross

WISDOM

In thinking about the name of this publication, Ross Morgan reminded me that wisdom is not something that can be found by searching or "doing." We cannot strive for personal wisdom. At a certain point in our lives, it may wrap itself around us – or not. Nonetheless, many Guild members believe that the natural forest expresses a wisdom that can be studied and, with luck, emulated. These foresters base their practice on close observation of the substances, patterns, and processes of the forest. This publication is dedicated to the search for "forest wisdom."

- Henry Carey