

Beckin 9

NORTH COAST TIMBER ASSOCIATION

PHONE
707-443-8047

Association Memo

350 "E" STREET
EUREKA, CALIF. 95501

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FACTS AND FICTION ABOUT THE REDWOOD FORESTS

RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS SHOULD KNOW WHICH IS WHICH

In these troublesome times a great deal is being said about rights. We hear of the right to dissent, the right to do one's own thing, the rights of certain groups and individuals to be heard in local, state, and federal legislative bodies. The Bill of Rights guarantees, constitutionally, certain freedoms which we, as citizens, have always taken for granted.

But nothing is said about responsibility. There is no Bill of Responsibility in the constitution. But perhaps there should be.

More people than ever before are concerned about air and water pollution, and about conservation of our natural resources as they should be. It is their right, as U. S. citizens to sound off, loud and clear, when they become aware of abusive practices which threaten our resources and our environment.

But hand in hand with the right to sound off is the responsibility of knowing what he is talking about.

Webster defines "conservation" as "planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect." "Planned Management" obviously does not mean locking up our remaining stands of timber, because that in itself would bring about eventual destruction from high winds, fire, and disease.

The true conservationist, as far as timber is concerned, is interested in just what Webster says: "Planned management," so that our trees are fully utilized as a crop--replanted when harvested, and thus insuring that we will have trees forever, just as we will have wheat forever, or corn forever, or anything else that is harvested, replanted, nurtured to maturity, and then harvested again.

It is certainly the right of every concerned person to pose certain questions concerning the redwoods of the North Coastal region. But it is also his responsibility to get factual answers to those questions.

We have tried on the following pages, to pinpoint some of the most serious misstatements of facts regarding forest management.

It's been said - "IF THE REDWOODS ARE LOGGED AT THE PRESENT RATE, THEY WILL BE GONE IN TEN YEARS."

Not so. The Forest Service certainly doesn't think so at any rate. In their Resource Bulletin PNW-35, they anticipate that sawtimber growth in the North Coastal subregion will increase from 1,511 million to 2,205 million board feet during the 55 year period from 1965 to 2020, attributing the increase to the abundance of second-growth timber on highly productive land.

We are talking about the commercial forests, but let's mention the park quality redwoods which grow on the alluvial flats and beaches.

The preservation of the redwood forests in their natural state is a worthy project, but there is nothing new about it. It has been going on for years. The California state redwood park area is 118,855 acres, and included in that acreage is 55,000 acres of the superlative redwoods, which are so majestic that they arouse reverence. In the past two years 3,369 acres were added to the park system. This acreage is part of the 8,000 acres long committed to the Save-The-Redwoods-League. When the remainder is acquired, just about all stands that can be called superlative will have been preserved.

It's been said - "WHEN TREES ARE CUT, THE FOREST DESTROYED?"

Not so. To an unpracticed eye a harvested area looks pretty raw and unless the full harvest-reproduction cycle is understood, it is easy to believe that timber harvesting is "destruction". Reproduction from natural seeding following logging operations, which turns and disturbs the soil providing a good seed bed, will exceed what Nature can do by itself. In addition, redwood stumps put forth sprouts anywhere from a few to dozens per stump.

no nutrient loss?
is good as a fire will?

In the so-called redwood region there are actually more Douglas Fir trees and other whitewood trees than there are redwoods. This simply indicates that coast redwoods are seldom found in pure stands. The whitewood species lack the redwoods' ability to sprout new trees from the stump, so if it is the intent of the forester to recreate the species mix found in the stand prior to logging, the whitewood species must be artificially seeded or planted.

It's been said - "LOGGING OPERATIONS WILL CAUSE EROSION WHICH WILL STRIP THE LAND TO BEDROCK."

Not so. There has always been erosion, and in times of flood there will be vastly increased erosion. In the comprehensive study which the Committee recommended for North Coast watersheds and which was prepared by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the California Department of Water Resources, it shows that nearly 90% of the erosion and sediment in the Eel and Mad river basins is contributed by natural causes. Sheet and gully erosion attributable to logging impacts is an amount just equal to that produced by black-tailed deer resident in the watersheds.

Logging activities which cause accelerated soil loss are mainly related to road construction. Erosion from this source can be minimized by proper layout and construction and necessary maintenance of roadways and culverts. Only about one percent of all soil loss is caused by roads.

It's been said - "WE MUST FORBID TIMBER HARVESTING IN WATERSHEDS TO PROTECT THE REDWOOD PARKS?"

Not so. The general conclusion of many studies conducted to determine the effects of logging on soil erosion and stream sedimentation

is that the impact of properly conducted operations is minimal and declines rapidly as regrowth of vegetation occurs.

Torrential rains always tax the capability of stream beds to carry off flood waters. To quote Emanuel Fritz, Professor of Forestry Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley, and a Fellow of the Society of American Foresters, "The 1964 flood was much greater than the one in 1955--14 feet higher, but the damage was far lighter, probably no greater than if there had been no logging upstream. Upper slopes of redwood forests have been under logging activity for a century and never has a park grove been significantly and permanently damaged."

It's been said - "LOGGING OPERATIONS WILL CAUSE DEER AND OTHER WILDLIFE TO BE DEPLETED."

Not so. The fact is that deer and other game flourish on cut-over lands because as soon as the brush takes over, each acre can support up to six times as much food for deer as older timber stands. The U. S. Forest Service recently awarded a contract to harvest 300 acres of timber in the Willamette National Forest in Oregon to help the deer population find food. It is true that deer, elk, and other wildlife will flee from the sounds of logging operations. But they will soon return to dine on the new crop which the forest will sprout.

It's been said - "CONTINUED CUTTING OF TIMBER WILL RUIN OUR RECREATION AND TOURIST AREAS".

Not so. If the total amount of redwood type land now dedicated to park status by all levels of government for use by the public for recreation and tourism is 142,000 acres. That's 220 square miles!

In addition, timber harvesting operations have made vast areas

accessible to the hunter, the fisherman, the hiker, by opening up roads and permitting the public to use them as they use our national forests and parks.

Very few people are physically equipped, and have the time, to put on their pack and roam the woods. What is needed now is not more land, but improved roads and better facilities.

It's been said - "IF TIMBER HARVESTING IS CURTAILED, JUST A FEW LARGE COMPANIES WILL BE AFFECTED AND THEY WON'T FEEL THE LOSS."

Not so. The most valuable single asset in the North Coast counties is timber-growing land. For example, Humboldt County depends on the forest products industries--lumber, plywood, and pulp, for more than 70 percent of its payroll--directly and indirectly. In Humboldt, Del Norte, and Mendocino Counties, the number of companies engaged in the forest products industry is 223, having 13,475 employees with an annual payroll of \$113,331,000. Based on a conservative one-for-one estimate, the indirect payroll, added to the direct payroll means a total payroll of \$226,662,000. Just a 10% reduction in these operations would mean a loss of \$22.6 million in payrolls in these 3 counties alone.

In these times, with so many of our working people troubled financially, it is dead certain that those who depend on forest products industries for their livelihood would, rather than have any phase curtailed, like to see production increased.

It's been said - "THE FOREST PRACTICE ACT DOES NOT PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT; IT MERELY SERVES THE INTERESTS OF THE FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY."

Not so. The State legislature, in 1945 declared that regulations

were needed to insure a future source of timber for the people of the State in the continuance of the forest industry. The legislature wisely decided that the industry itself could best determine what practical actions should be taken to leave the land in a productive condition after logging and to protect present and future forest corps from destruction by fire, insects and disease.

The State Forester is charged with the administration of the Forest Practice Act and necessary amendments to the Act must be approved by the State Legislature. There is a different set of appropriate forest practice rules for each of four California forest districts--the redwood region is District 1.

In addition, there are statutes other than the 1947 Forest Practice Act which place stringent environmental controls on timber operations to protect the other natural resources of our forest lands.