

Redwood Nation Earth First!

Dear Supporters,

Like the weather, the campaign to Protect Richardson Grove is heating up. As deadlines approach, the effort to protect the awesome ancient redwoods lining the highway 101 corridor through the Park from the ravages of Caltrans' "Realignment" Plan is shifting into high gear!

Caltrans wants to widen the road and lengthen its curves to allow bigger trucks to go faster through the Grove. The project would bring this section of the road up to Surface Transportation Assistance Act standards. It would lift current restrictions on truck lengths and mandate other unsavory changes, such as huge turnouts and roadside truck stops.

This is our State Park, not a corporate speedway.

Many of the trees at risk are 1,000 years old or older, with diameters of up to 18 feet. Redwood tree roots interlock with each other and many touch the existing roadway. The widening project will cut and rip redwood roots up to two inches thick and excavate to depths of 36", then backfill the holes with a porous concrete mixture topped with hot asphalt.

Since these small roots are feeder roots, the damaged trees could have trouble transporting water to their upper branches, compromising their structures. In addition, the concrete fill would leach a base pH into the soil of these acid-loving trees. Toxic compounds from the existing road materials laced with lead and oil and other chemicals from vehicle brake linings would be stirred up and spread around by the construction work. Not healthy!

Is this more than you ever wanted to know about the intricacies of redwoods' well-being? Here's what we're doing to stop this disastrous project from putting trees in danger. Ecotrans, a Redwood Nation EF! affinity group, is back to take on Caltrans a second time! In 1997, Ecotrans, in a coalition of four local groups, won a lasting victory when Caltrans agreed to stop the spraying of roadside herbicides in five counties. At that time Caltrans was the largest user of herbicides in California. Today, mechanical removal creates more and safer jobs for workers. Now, Ecotrans has renewed itself with updated nonviolence training. On Memorial Day it held its first demo at Richardson Grove!

Wearing orange vests and hard hats labeled "Ecotrans EF!," activists demonstrated at the north end of the Grove, holding signs with a message based on the Simon & Garfunkle song: "Feelin' Grovey" (I mean groovy). Spaced at intervals along the road like old Burma Shave ads, the signs read: "Slow Down—You Move—Too Fast—You Gotta —Make The—Forest Last!

Another large sign broadcast a simpler version of the group's message. The sign showed an enormous truck inside a red circle with a diagonal red line through it and the words: "CALTRANS: NO WIDENING!"



Redwood
by Kay Rudin

Big Trees or Big Trucks?

Redwood Nation Earth First! has been working as a part of the Coalition to Save Richardson Grove. The Coalition includes a broad range of community groups and individuals united in opposing the project. Environmental Protection Information Center and Citizens' Alternatives to Toxics, affectionately known as EPIC and CATs, have teamed up with Center for Biodiversity and private parties to file two lawsuits against the plan, one each in the Federal and State courts.

The plaintiffs recently applied for a Preliminary Injunction. A ruling is expected by July 1st or earlier. If unsuccessful, Caltrans could start the bidding process within 30 days, and once a contract is awarded, the sinister plot could begin by early August.

That's why a Headwaters-style rally is **planned for June 22, in Sacramento** to get the eyes of the media and the ears of the Governor focused on Realignment's critical consequences for the redwoods. While others lobby, we'll use

music, banners, signs and street theatre to deliver a clear message: "CALTRANS – DON'T RIP REDWOOD ROOTS!" You are all invited! A bus will start boarding at 7:00 am at the Willits Environmental Center at 630 S Main, Willits Wednesday, June 22nd. Email me to arrange car pooling at nomiwagner@yahoo.com.

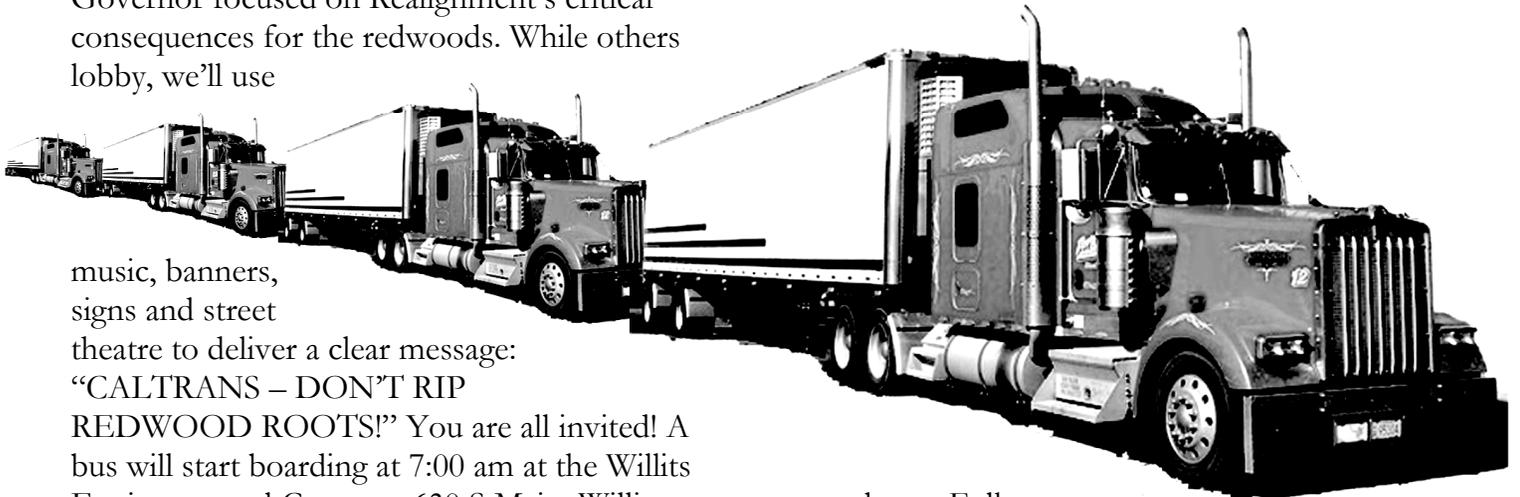
These are budget-busting times. We want to ask Governor Brown how we can afford to waste precious public funds on boondoggles like this one when existing roads are crumbling? Why risk the health of our ancestral trees for higher profits for a few private individuals? Too few of these ancient redwoods are left.

Many local truckers oppose the plan. McKinleyville trucker Randy Jones stated in the North Coast Journal on June 2nd that his fleet is specialized to the Richardson Grove conditions as they are now. He has invested big bucks into trucks that do not require giant sleeper cabs. Smaller, more local companies are concerned about the competition from the mega-corporations and their super-sized long distance haulers.

In other Redwood Nation Earth First! news, the protection of the Noyo Headwaters was finalized in April when Save the Redwoods League officially purchased the property from the owners of Willits Redwood Company for \$8.5 million. A big sigh of relief, and maybe sticker-shock at the price, has gone out from the lungs of many redwood lovers. We celebrated the long-awaited protection aboard the Skunk Train on a ride past the mighty redwood spires that rise up along the tracks.

The irony here is that the arborist for Save the Redwoods League has signed off on the Richardson Grove plan! Bummer. We will work to persuade the League to withdraw its endorsement.

In early spring, Redwood Nation EF! extended its outreach by canvassing in Mendo and Humboldt counties. This effort resulted in a big jump in support and sign-ups for the



newsletter. Folks are clearly fired up to do what it takes to protect what's left of our precious forests, nonviolently of course.

A huge and heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters, old and new! Your generosity and enthusiasm are inspiring and help energize us here on the front lines. Your support helps pay for outreach materials, organizing expenses and jail and legal assistance. Thank you, thank you, thank you, and please keep it comin'!

For the Forest,

Naomi Wagner
Redwood Nation Earth First!