

Redwood Nation Earth First!

So what's been happening in the redwood bioregion? What have we been doing lately to deserve your undying support?

Redwood Nation Earth First! continues to do what it takes to be as prepared as possible for nonviolent direct action as the need arises. Right now, our attention is riveted on developments in Richardson Grove and the Willits Bypass. The more we study these misguided projects, the more reasons we find to resist them.



In the works for fifty years, Caltrans' plans are anachronistic and completely out of touch with the needs of the natural and human communities on the North Coast.

Fortunately, both these projects have landed in court. The Environmental Protection Information Center and the Center for Biological Diversity are suing Caltrans over Richardson Grove and have joined the Willits Environmental Center and the Redwood Coast Sierra Club Chapter in opposing the Willits Bypass plan. Unfortunately, we know we can't always rely on the courts. A temporary injunction currently holds Caltrans at

bay in the Grove. No injunction has been obtained yet for the Bypass and bids have been accepted. Construction could begin as early as this fall.

Bypass bad: traffic projections show an elevated two or four lane freeway is not justified and will not even solve Willits' chronic congestion problems as so little traffic would be diverted.

Facts be damned, Caltrans' plan calls for two enormous interchanges, one on either end of town connecting to thirty foot high earthen berms connecting to a mile-long viaduct straddling the valley, supported on hundreds of concrete pylons! Thousands of wicks would drain the wetlands into culverted creeks from which any remaining salmon would be shanghaied and "relocated." An entire hilltop would be removed. Historic black and valley oaks would have to bite the dust. Bye-bye migratory bird nesting habitat.

The project's promise of jobs is a cruel hoax, as non-local contractors have been selected and employment would be temporary.

Ninety miles north of the bypass, Caltrans plans to continue their proposed Highway 101 rampage by aligning and widening the highway in a manner that would hurt over 100 ancient redwoods living peacefully for the past 2000 years or so in what is now our Richardson Grove State Park. After cutting roots up to two inches thick and three feet deep, "as needed," Caltrans would then fill, compact, and pave, restricting water and oxygen to the shallow rooted giants.

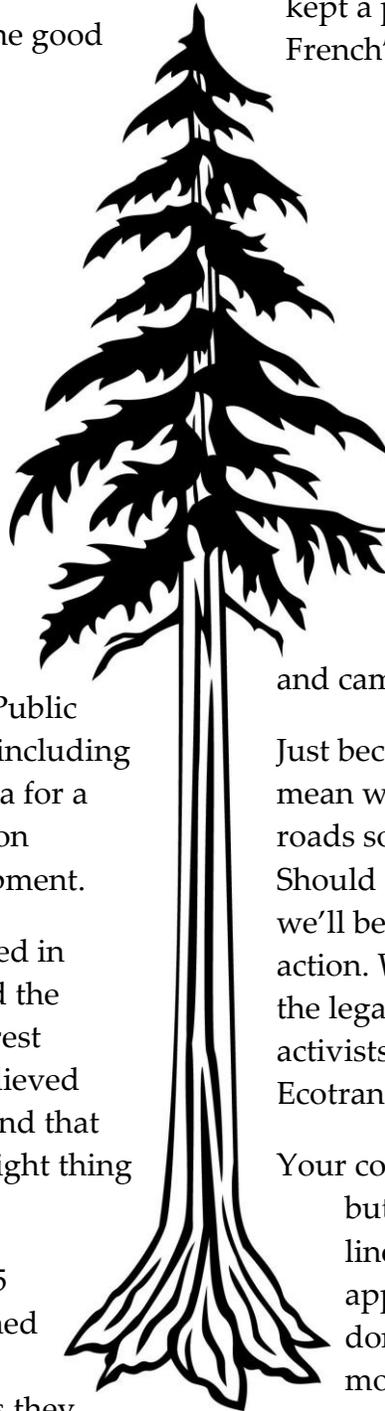
Sticker shock: the price tag for the widening is \$10 million. The thing is big trucks with “exemptions” already can and do pass safely through the narrow one mile stretch by just — you guessed it— slowing down a little.

OK that was the bad news. Here’s the good news.

The McKay Tract is saved!—EF! Humboldt declares victory! After four years of tree sitting in a 60 acre area containing scattered old growth and 100 year old second growth redwoods on a Green Diamond Timber Harvest Plan near Eureka, activists agreed to come down when the company officially closed the THP without logging it. GD finally saw the (green) light and became willing sellers of roughly 2,000 acres of their property in the Ryan Creek watershed to Trust for Public Lands. TPL will transfer some of it, including the tree sit area, to the City of Eureka for a community forest with a conservation easement precluding future development.

“These trees would have been logged in 2009 if we hadn’t gone up there, and the threat remained until now,” said forest defender Jeremy Jensen. “We are relieved that there was a positive outcome, and that Green Diamond decided to do the right thing for this particular grove.”

Activists had roped together over 55 trees to create an airy village sustained by strong community support. The activists were as agile in the press as they were in the canopy. They successfully maneuvered the reluctant company into announcing the pending sale with a well-timed press release, causing GD to respond and confirm their plans publicly.



This Spring RNEF! held a well attended nonviolence training near the Grove. In June we “occupied” Richardson Grove, camping, hiking and biking to strengthen our connections to each other and the Grove. All summer we’ve kept a presence at the “Truth Booth” at French’s Camp, the nearby tourist turnout, to inform folks about Caltrans’ nefarious widening plan.

In August, we hosted the eco-friendly bands Clan Dyken and the Ginger Ninjas on their Emerald Triangle Bicycle Music Tour. Wearing orange vests and holding “Save the Grove” signs to slow traffic, Ecotrans, the Garberville Bike Co-op, local Veterans for Peace, and the Coalition to Save Richardson Grove welcomed some 25 riders carrying backpacks, instruments, and camping gear on the 300+ mile route.

Just because we’re focused on roads doesn’t mean we’ve lost sight of the trees. It’s just that roads so often go through trees and wetlands. Should the courts and all other measures fail, we’ll be ready to take nonviolent direct action. We depend on your help to provide the legal, media, and outreach support activists need to be effective. Plus, our orange Ecotrans vests look good and work great!

Your continued support not only sustains us but also inspires us to stay on the front lines. We know you have our backs and appreciate it greatly. Individual donations are the lifeblood of our movement. Thanks for being there.

To get more involved please contact us at:
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For the Forest,
Naomi Wagner
Redwood Nation EF!

