

# Redwood Nation Earth First!

Action is indeed the antidote to despair, and we've had plenty of each this year. Our 2018 nonviolence trainings, marching, blockading, and protesting focused on environmental and social justice — forest protection, global climate change, and Indigenous rights. New affinity groups and coalitions such as the Pacific Alliance for Indigenous and Environmental Action have grown from our trainings. We bring nonviolent direct action to the mix, providing organizing experience, legal support and media skills.

This year, we've stayed focused on "Hack & Squirt:" injecting millions of hardwood trees, mainly tan oaks, with the cell-disrupting poison, Imazapyr, killing them gradually from the top down. Mendocino and Humboldt Redwood Company (MRC and HRC) use hack & squirt alongside copious quantities of Garlon (Triclopyr) and Roundup (Glyphosate) to kill brush. Herbicides are bad for the environment but cheaper than manual removal.

On its website, MRC claims it is reducing herbicide use, applying the lethal chemicals only occasionally and sparingly, in accordance with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) rules. MRC profits from the lucrative "sustainably harvested" green label. But data from the Mendocino County Agricultural Department show the opposite trend: MRC's use of all three herbicides has increased every year since 2012 with Imazapyr more than doubling since 2015. MRC uses more herbicides than all other local timber companies combined.

We held a Spring action camp near Comptche, the heart of Mendocino County's hack & squirt country. Thirty activists from near and far took part

in nonviolence and consensus process training by RNEF! with Humboldt trainers sharing canopy climbing skills. The camp was held on land protected by a conservation easement, preserving enormous old growth tan oaks, gnarled madrones, and towering redwoods, an ideal reminder of what we stand for: a healthy, diverse forest full of animals, free of poisons and deforestation logging.

Herbicides compromise water quality, contaminate traditional tribal gathering grounds, and reduce habitat for wildlife. Leaving millions of dead trees standing increases fire intensity and smoke-borne toxins, endangering — well, everyone.



But don't take our word for it. The UN and State of California have identified Glyphosate as a carcinogen. The FSC itself considers Glyphosate a "highly hazardous pesticide" and sets a bar above which such pesticides are considered unacceptable in FSC certified forests. Such designations are considered a "socially" determined decision in the FSC certification system, in other words, community standards and sentiments are supposed to matter.

Mendocino County's Measure V, now an Ordinance prohibiting the intentional leaving of dead standing trees for over ninety days, passed by 62% in 2016. MRC continues to thumb its nose at the public will and still hacks and squirts unabated.

The roots of ancient redwoods in Richardson Grove State Park along highway 101 just north of the Mendo-Humboldt County line, have again temporarily escaped Caltrans' plans to shave them off, to facilitate faster truck travel through the County. A recent court decision rejected the re-submitted, but still abhorrent, highway widening project. This fight ain't over, as Caltrans is known to pursue its goals relentlessly, at taxpayer expense. Caltrans: Don't make us hug those trees!

A campaign is reopening to protect ancient redwoods on the Mendocino Coast, in Kaizen Gulch and Osprey Grove, where MRC wants to lop off scores of gorgeous skyscraper-tall trees, finishing what Louisiana Pacific started before being halted in court during the Timber Wars of the 1990's. A new (sort of) affinity group, the Veterans of Timber Wars, is actively monitoring.

This summer, we supported our Humboldt EF! allies' longstanding resistance on Rainbow Ridge, above the lower North Fork of the Mattole River, to deter HRC, MRC's other half, from cutting the last, remaining ancient Douglas Firs. This breathtakingly untouched area is home to rare and endangered species including the Pacific Fisher, Northern Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Humboldt Martin, and a rare medicinal fungus. These are the same trees narrowly saved from the saws of Maxxam back in the day. HRC/MRC say they don't cut old growth, but they do.

Two activists supporting the strategically placed tree sit and monopod on Rainbow Ridge were jumped one August morning before dawn. Company-hired Security guards in full military gear threw them to the ground, threatened them with pepper spray and arrested them. Security denied the occupants of the monopod and treesit food and water and blasted them with bright lights and loud music for several days and nights. The blockade was finally dismantled — whereupon, the activists escaped!



A Week of Action at HRC in Scotia followed this forcible

eviction from the woods, swelled by supporters from L.A. to Oregon. RNEF! plugged into Action Camp, offering a women's workshop, joining the demonstrations and assisting with media. After protesting at Headquarters all week, a banner blockade was held at the HRC mill head, briefly stopping log trucks and lining them up on the 101 highway shoulders.

At first, drivers stopped for the movable blockade and accepted informational handouts. But one trucker suddenly sped up, barreling right through the "No Hack and Squirt" banner from behind, passing perilously close to activists. The banner was ripped off its poles and out of their hands. We recovered the banner, which had flown onto the hood, draped over a fender and trailed onto the freeway, just as the Sheriff arrived, and reported the intentional vehicular assault.

We joined the glorious Climate Justice March in San Francisco on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Mendocino and Humboldt forest protectors formed the Pacific North West Forest contingent, marching behind our allies in the Indigenous Bloc, carrying the vintage Earth First! banner later glimpsed on Democracy Now! Wow!

At the southern end of the bioregion, we attended the Acorn Festival this October at the old Air Force Base near Pt. Arena, held for the third year by the Pt. Arena and Kashia Pomo Bands. We support the Bands' efforts to regain their traditional gathering grounds on lands now-controlled by the Air Force and MRC. Last year MRC granted some access to gather the nutritious nuts, but the bordering forest tracts contained Imazapyr-poisoned tan oaks.

Your donations are greatly appreciated as always and really help keep forest protection on course. Please contact me if direct action is on your mind.

Solidarity,

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