

Redwood Nation Earth First!

This year was the 30th anniversary of the May 24, 1990 bombing of Earth First! leader Judi Bari, that almost took her life. Judi posthumously won a \$4.4 million judgment by a federal jury in 2002 against the FBI and Oakland Police Department for violating her civil rights. The case was never appealed and has sent a lasting warning to would-be infiltrators, agents and disruptors.

It's been way too long since we contacted you! Over a year has passed without a peep from the front lines to our supporters. As Judi said, "It's hard to write about something when you're in the thick of it."

Our thousands of direct action arrests were the driving force behind the \$380 million, 7,500 acre Headwaters Deal in 1998. In 2013, direct action prevailed again with Willits Redwood Company, saving iconic ancient redwoods in the Headwaters of the Noyo River along the Skunk Train. Next in line was our Caltrans' Willits bypass campaign in 2014 which helped win protections for Indigenous cultural sites and kept herbicides off the nearby wetlands after numerous direct action arrests.

Since then we have been opposing herbicide use in the forest. "Hack and Squirt" is the killing of tan oaks and other forest hardwoods by lethal injection. Mendocino County voters overwhelmingly declared this practice an illegal fire hazard in 2016. But threatened with lawsuits by Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC), Supervisors' have been unwilling to enforce it. So we are currently moving to different tactics.

We are also now working on addressing the production end. You see, the result of small log, fast rotation "plantation" style, monoculture management as practiced by MRC is low quality wood and vast quantities of so-called "by-products." Mountains of woodchips overshadow the relatively few stacks of sapwood checkered

2x4s at the MRC-owned pellet plant in Calpella. The surfeit of sawdust being turned into pallets full of pellets is a measure of today's forest degradation.

These pellets, which require specially rated woodstoves, do burn more efficiently than regular firewood. However these pellets are a climate change disaster — when burned in a electric power plant, wood pellets release 65% more CO2 than coal per megawatt hour. The impact on forests is devastating. There is also a terrible toll on infants, elders, and the disabled unlucky enough to live near a pellet plant. Unfortunately, this includes residents of the Coyote Valley Reservation, the Tribal Health Clinic, several schools, and many primarily Spanish-speaking and low-income residents living near the Calpella plant.



Redwood forest made into pellets at Calpella pellet plant

The Calpella pellet plant had two fires this year alone. The plant is a combination of large amounts of stacked wood products and fuels stored in the yard, with machinery operating 24/7 near a residential neighborhood. This year, neighbors became alarmed by the constant plume of dark smoke wafting over their neighborhood night and day. Research revealed that no Environmental Impact Review had been required when the plant was originally sited. Consequently, residents were never notified or consulted about possible health

and safety risks of the operation, nor given an opportunity to suggest alternative locations.

Pellet production facilities release dangerous particulate matter and volatile organic compounds. After two years of unregulated emissions, the Calpella pellet plant finally installed a “scrubber” to reduce air pollution enough to comply with Air Quality Management District permit conditions. Monitoring to date has been woefully inadequate or absent.



Calpella pellet plant smokestack emissions

On July 28, 2020 we worked with a coalition of Northern California and statewide environmental and social justice advocates led by our affinity groups SEIJ — Social Environmental Indigenous Justice, to send a letter to the Mendocino County Air Quality Management District and the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, the State EPA, and the California Air Resources Board demanding that the Mendocino Forest Product’s Calpella wood pellet plant’s operations be

suspended during the pandemic and when air quality is hazardous.

In August, amid smoke so thick it turned day into night, we donned Covid masks and demonstrated outside the pellet plant, a half mile away from the grey plume. Hanging from the freeway overpass, a large banner appeared in the dawns’ gloomy light reading: “Stop Pellet Plant Pollution!”

In July of last year, three women, including two elders, one of whom was myself, locked down together; we sat on the ground in the 4:30 am darkness to confront oncoming log trucks arriving to haul away the last ancient Douglas firs on Rainbow Ridge in the Mattole, Humboldt County. The trucks stopped just shy of a circle of EF!ers linking arms around us then turned around and left. Two other lock downs were happening simultaneously that morning, one on a bulldozer in the woods and another by an intrepid eighty-five year old at a second entry gate. The actions served both to slow the destruction of the forest and as a show of solidarity with younger activists brutalized at earlier actions by either sheriffs or timber thugs.

We work with the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council and Pacific Alliance for Indigenous and Environmental Action to stop the Navy’s plans to detonate deep sea explosives off the Mendocino Coast.

We facilitate direct action trainings, put out press releases, and provide legal support for activists. Not asking you for money in 2019 left us in a lurch this year. Your generous donations help volunteers and direct action activists pay for gas, food, and hardware. We are very thankful when we open the Post Office box and can once again turn your contributions into political action for forest protection.

Solidarity,

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