

Redwood Nation Earth First!

Ask me about the action in Jackson and I'll tell you about a nonviolent forest defense campaign that is tribally led, community based, and rapidly becoming a movement. The Campaign to Save Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF), now in its second year, has grown legs and is going statewide by leaps and bounds!

Last January, we welcomed the Board of Forestry's announcement that no new timber sales would be put out to bid in JDSF for 2022, a decision that just may have had something to do with our all-out protests in 2021. In lieu of revenues from timber sales to pay their salaries and rubber stamp timber harvest plans (THPs), CalFire would receive \$10 million from the State for "non timber related activities." Awwooo! But wait, not so fast...three "previously approved" plans would still be logged despite the intense resistance sparked by CalFire's previous attempts to cut them. Caspar 500, Red Tail and Soda Gulch had slipped under the no-new-THP-submissions wire.

After facing down security goons to protect sacred sites in Soda Gulch, one of the most significant Pomo cultural landscapes in California, and fending off live chain saws from old growth redwoods in Caspar 500, the action this year focused on Red Tail. This 345 acre THP just east of Fort Bragg off Highway 20, contains mostly second growth redwoods and a few old growth trees. Some are over five feet in diameter and are just beginning to develop the craggy cavities and broad branches favored by spotted owls and marbled murrelets. The area is supposed to be managed by CalFire as an "Older Forest Development Area",

for such characteristics as large old trees and snags connecting it to a wildlife corridor, yet citizen monitors say almost every large tree is marked for cut or already felled.

On January 11, the publicity-averse CalFire finally arrested three activists inside the Red Tail plan, with three others "citizen arrested" by loggers outside the plan, for a total of six. No charges were filed. A de facto moratorium ensued, dubbed a "pause" by CalFire, merging into the required logging hiatus for spotted owl nesting season. Fortuitously, the owls lollygagged into May, prolonging the "pause" by a month.

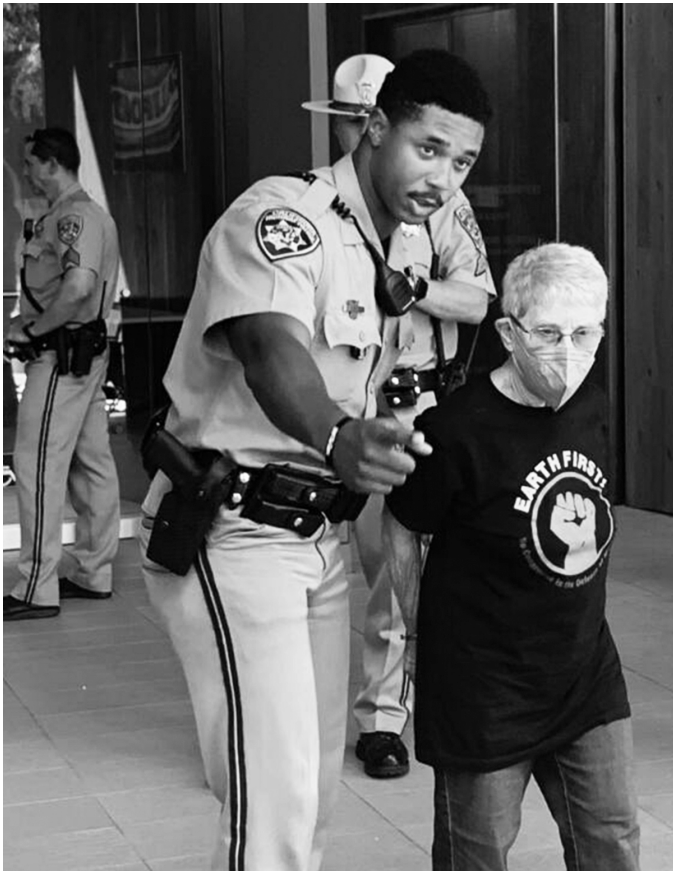
By mid-summer, government-to-government consultations between representatives of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, a sovereign



nation, and the State of California were progressing towards a preliminary agreement on co-management. Communication had also opened, at least a crack, between the Tribe, the Coalition to Save Jackson Forest (the aforementioned broad-based community support group), and CalFire over the logging contractor's request to haul already felled logs out of Red Tail.

In early August, the Board of Forestry announced that the "pause" would be replaced with an official "hold." Our primary demand had been granted. Our hopes for a new mandate prioritizing respect, restoration, and recreation were kindled by statements of Natural Resource Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot. The Secretary's mid-August speech praised co-management and working with

Indigenous cultures. But maybe it was all too good to be true? It was. Barely had we declared a cautious victory when the Board of Forestry reversed itself. On Aug. 19, without notifying their Coyote Valley counterparts, CalFire issued another press release reneging on all its promises, declaring the talks to be “concluded” and unilaterally announcing logging would resume in JDSF immediately. This slap in the face resulted in fifty furious folks going to Sacramento — twice — to demand the moratorium be reinstated.



During an August 30th rally to protest Resource Secretary Crowfoot’s back-pedaling, six more activists were arrested for sitting down in front of the giant glass doors of the California Natural Resources building and refusing to budge. In September, we returned to the Capitol to reinforce our demands. Pomo singers, drummers, and dancers swirling colorful banners, joined by supporters from local tribes, briefly occupied the Resource building’s rotunda, filling the space with chants of “No More Broken Promises!” and “Pomo Land Back!”

So far, our demands for a moratorium seem to have fallen on deaf ears, but logging hasn’t resumed either. In a Sept. 26th letter, CalFire delivered a take-it-or-leave-it proposal to Coyote Valley offering a mere 75 acres for tribal co-management on a portion of the Caspar 500 THP least valued by the contractor. The letter failed to mention increased protections for sacred and cultural sites that are at the heart of tribal concerns. In response, we held a “Hell No, CalFire!” protest in November at the CalFire offices in Ft. Bragg.

Governor Newsom has issued a directive that all State-owned lands be co-managed with the Tribes whose ancestors originally inhabited those lands. This is an outcome of the Governor’s Truth and Healing Commission, to address grave harms done to Indian people by State sponsored programs to exterminate them, appropriate their lands, and outlaw their traditions. Jackson Forest is the ancestral home of the Pomo and Northern Yuki.

To round out the year, we held one more nonviolence training in late November and a next-day monitoring action in Red Tail. Over 150 people have attended nonviolence trainings this year and many want to stay involved. We’ve shared our skills and experience through media work, organizing, community outreach, and of course, putting our bodies on the line. Lacking relief in court, nonviolent direct action continues to be the mainstay of the Jackson campaign, keeping the trees standing.

That’s the Jackson Forest story up to now. We hope you’re as inspired as we are by the thought of returning 50,000 acres of iconic redwood forest to Indigenous care. As always, we can use all the help you can give! You’re greatly appreciated and really keep us going.

For the Earth,

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