

RAINBOW RIDGE

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Describing themselves as heirs to the infamous **Pinkerton's**- the **Pinkerton National Detective Agency**- a private security guard and detective agency formed in 1850, notorious for it's violent suppression of labor organizing and strike breaking.

Lear operatives wear camouflaged uniforms bearing military-style insignia. Since 2014 they have been dropped, well armed, from helicopters into the redwood forests of **Mendocino County**, where they have been employed to cut down marijuana plants on private lands- without identifying themselves or answering questions about who they are. They see themselves filling a void that law enforcement cannot handle, much to the dismay of **Mendocino's Sheriff Tom Allman** who has referred to them as **'vigilantes.'**



Lear's founder, **Paul Trouette**, claims that the 2011 shooting death of **Jere Melo**, inspired his incorporation that same year. Melo, a former mayor and city council member of **Fort Bragg** had worked as a forester for **Georgia Pacific**, and as a private security contractor for **Campbell Timberland Management** regularly conducted investigations into trespassing. Melo was shot to death while engaged in property management.

Lear has not hesitated to play its quasi-law enforcement role. for instance, In June 2013, Lear was scouting an illegal marijuana grow on private land in Mendocino, when two trespassing individuals were encountered they detained them, one of whom was armed with a handgun, and called the police, who then arrested the men for possessing firearms and methamphetamine. Now in Humboldt on behalf of Humboldt Redwood Company, Lear is playing out their paramilitary enforcement on Rainbow Ridge.

Two of the forest defenders have been booked and released, as other forest defenders remain inside the pod at the blockade while guards continue to harass them.

Contact HRC's head forester of the **Mattole**, **Ben Hawke** @ (707) 764-4161 or (707) 489-2871 to demand that the harassment stops and that all charges be dropped against the forest defenders!

Humboldt Redwood Company, and **Mendocino Redwood Company**, are owned by San Francisco's **Fisher family**, owners of the **GAP** empire, including the **Old Navy** and **Banana Republic** stores. The Fishers themselves deny day to day involvement in the timber company's policies, but as owners, they are the bottom-line decision-makers, and need to feel the heat. One defender explained: *"the Fishers profit on everything from political influence, sweat shops, and environmental degradation of indigenous ancestral lands. I'm here to directly resist their influence."* Call the GAP corporate headquarters today! 800-333-7899 Tell them to use their ownership leverage to END the assault on the non-violent protesters, and pull logging crews out of old growth forest! Tell them you will support a boycott of their stores.

Supporters of the forest defenders, including **Mattole Valley** residents, have been at **Monument Gate** every morning since Sunday's raid to show solidarity with the people blocking the road and opposition to HRC's planned logging and herbicide operations. Rallies took place at the main gate of the **Monument Road** entrance to HRC's forest lands Monday and Tuesday to show solidarity and support for the **Mattole** forest and its protectors. Another demo was held at HRC's **Scotia** office, 125 Main St., Scotia 95565. Supporters are encouraged to come out and support, please see the **Mattole Forest** Facebook page for updates and directions.

This blockade is like a flower. You can cut the top off but it's always going to grow back!

<https://www.facebook.com/Save-the-Mattoles>.

Thanks to , **Verbana.**, and **Karen P.**, itsgoingdown.org indybay.org

'APPROVED THP'S: NEVER GOOD ENOUGH'

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We were horrified that once again **Hohman & Associates** had submitted a brutal, inappropriate industrial THP for **Seely Creek**, severely fragmenting the precious, intact redwood ecosystem in our small watershed, with the "group selection" method of forestry. The CA. Dept. of forestry's own website describes "group selection" as open to abuse. The big timber companies are masters at abusing "group selections". When questioned about why he chose a 362 acre commercial **THP**, over an **NTMP**, which is what most small landowners use, Land owner **Trevor Anderson** said; **"a THP is way cheaper than an NTMP. I've got huge mortgage payments."**

Our neighborhood weeps every morning starting at the crack of dawn. Our peaceful, rural residential homes invaded by noise pollution from chainsaws, our hearts breaking as each tall redwood neighbor crashes to the ground.

The south Fork of the **Eel River** has recently been designated by **NOAA** and other agencies, as one of the top rivers for restoration of wild salmon runs on the west coast. **Redwood Creek** is one of the seven top priority watersheds within the South Fork of the **Eel River** slated for restoration. **Seely Creek**, with her long low gradient reaches, and excellent canopy cover, was looking forward to the real possibility of once again living up to her full potential, and recovery, as a vibrant refuge, and nursery for coho, chinook, and steelhead. Her redwood groves are also home to a recovering, old growth loving, population of fisher. (*martis penanti*)

So why was the THP approved in the first place? Because The **California Department of Forestry** has never seen a **THP** it didn't like. **CDF** rubber stamps them all.

Seely Creek, like most creeks, has suffered heavily and been repeatedly abused by white guys with the Eurocentric *"the world is my slave for the taking"* mentality.

Bad logging, bad road building, burgeoning homestead over population created by the green rush, and the dewatering of the watershed by the cannabis industry.

I talked to **Trevor** several times about the alarming cutting he's doing on the extremely steep unstable slope of **Seely Creek's** main-stem. Where Large trees were removed right down to the creek, and a few 'pecker poles' remain. There are well documented, debris torrents, and rotational landslides along the main spawning grounds of the creek. Our once 90% canopied creek, has been cut back to 70% in many places, enough to raise water temperatures in an already stressed creek. People frequently ask me if cutting redwoods is even legal...unfortunately it is.

In a phone conversation, I expressed my concern about a three acre clearcut, mid slope, A slope determined to be one of the most geologically unstable areas of our watershed. **Seely Creek** has no rock, it is silt, and clay, with a layer of mudstone underneath. **Trevor** intimated that he'd done the watershed a big favor by doing that clear cut. "How so?" I asked. He told me, **"By removing all the tan oaks"** which he was indoctrinated into believing, are trash trees.

I told him tan oak acorns were prized by the first people, and are one of the prime food sources for wildlife. Tan oak plays a key role, and is as valuable as any other tree in the ecosystem. I asked him why he didn't leave the redwood and fir. He told me he needed to pay for the clearing of the tan oak so he can later plant redwood. He seemed to believe that the cut over area was no problem because the redwood and tan oak roots would hold it. I realized he is too young to remember all the massive slides on redwood clear cuts, like the one that almost took out the town of **Stafford**, and the **PALCO** slide that almost flooded lower **Redway**.

We've expressed our dismay at his taking out large second growth, trees six feet in diameter and greater. They may not be old growth, but they have the characteristics of becoming old growth. **Trevor** calls them junk trees, he needs to make money.

Mother Nature says; 'there are no such thing as junk trees.'

We've asked him if we could buy individual trees, he said no. We asked him if we could hire a different forester to write a better plan for the steep slope along the prime spawning grounds. No, his mortgage is too high. How about slowing down the cut, no, the interest rates would be too high.

As usual, the quest for money drives the continual rape of our beautiful planet.

It is heartbreaking that **Seely Creek's** redwoods are paying for a conversion into yet another trite cannabis wasteland. There are ways to log that can enhance a forest, but viewing a forest as a cash cow quickie, for paying off a mortgages, and to make a bundle is not one of them. Nor is conversion to a tree plantation, or the wanton use of heavy equipment compacting the soil through out the landscape.

It is also sad that the old timers are too old and tired to climb trees, they are bummed about the logging, but too complacent to take a stand, and the **"Me Generation"** of young pot growing *dudes* and *dudettes* just don't care. They seem to be unaware of just how rare redwoods are on this planet.

Many of us remember local band **"Rod and the Ideals"** and their iconic song **"2,000,000 acres"** a soulful lament about the loss of Redwoods. **Trevor's** dad played guitar on that song. *Oh the irony*, the sons of **Rod** and **Ty** trolled me on Facebook, **for making Seely Creek Redwoods a public issue.** **Ty** and **Rod** must be rolling in their graves.

There are only a few women elders taking an active stand, blocking logging trucks and working behind the scenes on the legal front. We understand those redwoods are an important, necessary keystone of our watershed. Those redwoods are our non-human neighbors, and the heart of our creek.

Big redwoods store more carbon than any other living being. Studies have shown unmanaged forest is 3° Celsius cooler than managed forests. One redwood tree contributes more to the health of our watershed than all the human residents combined.

Unfortunately, the **"Butcher of Seely Creek"**, **Steven Hohman & Associates**, has struck again, and submitted yet a third **THP** for our watershed. We are more prepared this time, and are challenging the **THP** every step of the way.

As the cannabis industry crumbles, and the thoughts of men turn to other ways of making quick cash- **realize your watershed may be next.**

It's time to start seriously thinking about neighborhood forest conservation easements.

Don't let your selves be hoodwinked. Complacency has no place in these times, and remember, never trust the son of a hippie.

- **George Holper**

