

RAINBOW RIDGE UNDER ASSAULT

Four prominent members of the Mattole community – Jane Lapiner, Ellen Taylor, David Simpson and Michael Evenson, were put under citizen’s arrest by “**security forces**” at Monument Gate leading into the 18,000 acres of the Humboldt Redwoods Company. The logging company has again hired paramilitary-styled security company Lear Asset Management of Ukiah, which employs tasers, dogs (they claim these are pets), at least one drone, and night-vision goggles. This equipment is familiar to Lear personnel who are veterans of U.S. wars in the Middle East. Last year, there were safety breeches by Lear employees using aggressive tactics. Thursday morning they showed up in camo gear on 4-wheelers.

The civil disobedience was a very early morning effort to **stop fallers** from Humboldt Redwood Company who **had already violated** a negotiated agreement between the logging company, the Forest Stewardship Council and the Lost Coast League (of which the Mattole Elders - whose average age was 75 - were representatives.) On Wednesday, June 5, 2019 the Lost Coast League had been informed that Humboldt Redwood Company had felled trees in an old, never-before logged forest stand on Rainbow Ridge.

This forest and its surroundings in the Mattole constitute the last, most ecologically significant, intact forest in the north Mattole headwaters. Rainbow Ridge covers an area southwest of Rio Dell beyond Monument Gate and located on the **headwaters** of the upper and lower forks of the Mattole River. Since 1986 Mattole residents have campaigned to preserve this **heritage landscape** from industrial logging by Pacific Lumber (MAXXAM Corporation) and now Humboldt Redwood Company. That’s 33 years of effort employing lawsuits (some won, some lost), and non-violent civil disobedience.

At stake is logging in *High Conservation Value Forests*. In developing the assessment of what constitutes such a forest, the stewardship council is concerned that Humboldt Redwood Company personnel consult with **qualified specialists, independent experts, and local community members** who may have knowledge of areas that meet the definition of a High Conservation Value forest. Consultations with these stakeholders and experts are required by the stewardship council to confirm that the location and attributes of High Conservation value forests are accurately identified, and that appropriate options for the maintenance have been adopted. The Forest Stewardship Council rewards such consultations with its **certification for sustainability** which is important to the HRC in its marketing through Home Depot.

Most recently, a formal complaint to the stewardship council, claiming **improper classification** of High Conservation Value Forests, the **excessive use** of herbicides, and **inadequate consultation** with LCL and its partners. FSC’s *auditors* (SCS Global Services) found the complaint to have merit in two areas: lack of a plan to **designate and protect** High Conservation Value Forests, and **lack of a plan** to phase out the widespread use of herbicides routinely used by HRC. The Petrolia-based LCL was assured by the founder of SCS, Dr. Robert Hrubes, that logging would not happen until HRC completed its reports as required by SCS Global and delivered them to LCL for evaluation. **Neither documents have been delivered to the Lost Coast League.**

Despite negotiations between HRC and Mattole citizens groups (Lost Coast League, Mattole Restoration Council, Mattole Salmon Group) and other environmental organizations on the North Coast, as well as persistent forest defense actions, **HRC has refused to allow the groups to achieve permanent protection** for these Mattole watershed land, which lie adjacent to Humboldt Redwoods State Park, home to the largest contiguous stands of virgin Coast redwood in the world and habitat for many endangered species. The remote area is the home to numerous threatened and endangered species, including Golden Eagle, Northern Goshawk, and Northern Spotted Owl and is the headwaters for the wild Mattole River stocks of coho and Chinook salmon.

“We are shocked and disappointed that Humboldt Redwood Company would rush in to log these trees without fulfilling the promise of their Forest Stewardship Council ‘sustainability’ audit,” said Michael Evenson, Vice President of LCL. *“Violating the terms of the audit should call into question the certification of their operations. This is an irreplaceable natural treasure. With respect to forest management in the Mattole, our site visit on September 11th revealed an instance that leads us to conclude that the companies are not utilizing every reasonably available opportunity to reduce herbicide use.”*

Two concerns have given regulatory agency CALFIRE pause for thought - toxicity of the herbicide Roundup and the associated fire hazard when areas of trees are killed with this poison and left standing. *“There are two revisions we will need within the plan.”* wrote CALFIRE forester Glenn Flamik in a recent email to Humboldt Redwood Company Forester Deakon Duey. In the timber harvest plan, Duey asserts that *“there are no reported cases of long-term health effects in humans due to Glyphosate.”* In the letter, Flamik points to public comments regarding **“recent court cases awarding millions of dollars to victims of Roundup exposure who developed cancer.”**

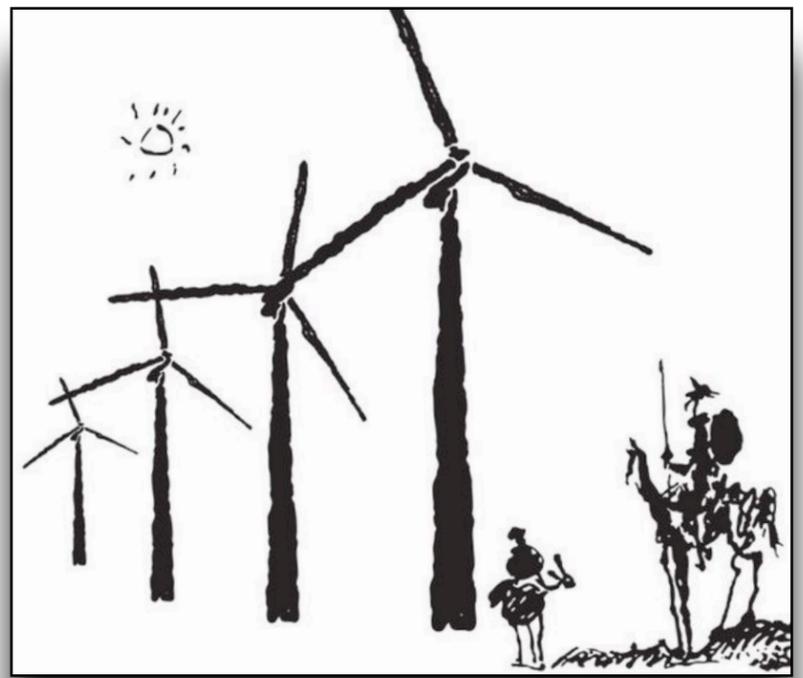
Next Flamik wrote, *“Public comment has raised the concern of using hack and squirt treatment of hardwoods and generating increased fuel loads of dead trees. Please address this practice of vegetative management and the wildfire risk associated with this THP.”* Emily Johnstone, who was one of several arrested last summer at a forest protection blockade had this to say: *“Roundup is a threat to the health and safety of our community, and that includes the workers applying the poison. Many of us live in fear of a deadly forest fire burning through our communities, these dead standing trees and logging slash and overcrowded tree-farms are a ticking time-bomb”.*

Dr. Hrubes’ report, January 13, 2019, mandated that Humboldt Redwood Company must undertake an updated assessment for the presence of high conservation values forests on its lands within the Mattole watershed. The results of the updated assessment must be shared with the Lost Coast League, et al, complainants. In response to LCL’s question whether HRC could log the stands in question, Hrubes that *“decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.”* Consistent with taking a precautionary approach, it is expected that a forest owner or manager **not undertake any site disturbing activities in an area prior to completing a High Conservation Value assessment of the area and establishing appropriate management prescriptions for maintaining or enhancing any identified high conservation.”**

Humboldt Redwood Company has not consulted further with LCL in regard to its herbicide plan or designation criteria for high conservation forests. In fact, LCL has received no communication from the company despite repeated attempts. The logging company has been urged to complete a *Biomass profile* of Rainbow Ridge with targeted **ground-truthing**– a scientifically credible practice to assess ecological old growth conditions. Humboldt Redwood Company has not shared its assessment with the LCL which had no opportunity to evaluate the logging company’s conclusions. It is within this context that the Lost Coast League cries “Foul” when HRC began logging-

Hence the civil disobedience.

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Humboldt Wind

There is a project proposed by Terra-Gen (owned by Energy Partners) and the company conducting their surveys, Stantec - a worldwide oil, gas, shale oil, pipeline company with 400 projects worldwide and 22,000 employees. Their plan is to install **sixty** 591-foot-tall wind turbines along Bear River and Monument Ridges in iconic coastal prairies. These gigantic turbines would be visible throughout virtually the entire Eel River Valley, areas around Humboldt Bay, and portions of the Lost Coast.

There is a petition opposing the project that will be delivered to Humboldt County Supervisors, Governor Gavin Newsom, The California State House, and The California State Senate by citizens opposed to the industrialization of our wild and rural wilderness and the massive scale of industrial wind turbines:

petitions.moveon.org/sign/humboldt-wind-farm

When you crest Table Bluff heading south on U.S. 101 and drop into the Eel River Valley, the lush green prairies frame the skyline and the ancestral territories of the Wiyot and Bear River tribes. To the Wiyot these are sacred cultural landscapes which represent generations of indigenous stewardship, culturally-prescribed burning practices and tending of the wild. The list of negative impacts both to tribal cultural resources and biological resources is significantly long.

Many species will be threatened by these turbines including Golden Eagles, Bald Eagles, Marbled Murrelets and several species of bats. Effects of sonic waves from the spinning blades on wildlife are not fully understood.

It remains an open question how environmentally-degrading could be the cumulative impacts of 25 miles of new gen-tie power lines with 50-foot-wide corridors through forests and grasslands, 17 miles of new access roads, and 19 miles of underground connections linking all the turbines across 124 parcels (all of which are owned by the Russ family, known for their five generations of ranching in Humboldt County, and by the Humboldt Redwood Company, successor of the Pacific Lumber company). The question isn’t whether this project would be damaging to ecological stability, just how much. *There’s hope though, in the fact that Timber Production Zone land and lands contracted under the Williams Act (a state tax reduction provision for lands with agricultural production) are not zoned for transmission line installation.*

Bear River (Tsakiyuwit) and Monument Ridges represent one of the largest native coastal prairie systems in Northwest California. Rare plant and animal species have been found throughout the project area, which remains mostly native herbaceous prairie and forest/prairie ecotone. In the larger context of altered and modified landscapes, where most non-forested habitats and grasslands are dominated by invasive non-native species, it has been widely acknowledged that native perennial grasslands in California are among the most endangered ecosystems in the United States, while also being biodiversity hotspots, with documented species richness nearly twice that of relatively diverse serpentine California grasslands, and other North American grasslands. Many of the coastal prairies described by the early Euro-American settlers have since been converted and encroached by young trees, in the absence of indigenous land management, placing a greater emphasis on the few native coastal prairies that remain.

The wind project is not economically viable on its own, which is why Terra-Gen is rushing us to get through the review process, so it can beat the expiration date of the Renewable Electricity Production Tax Credit (PTC) in 2020, and why company rep Vajdos said earlier last year that, “The project needs to move quickly in order to work financially.”

On MasterResource, A Free Market Energy Blog, it is noted that, **“The U.S. Treasury estimates that the PTC will cost taxpayers \$40.12 billion in the period from 2018 to 2027, making it by far the most expensive energy subsidy under current tax law,”** and that **“after billions in public handouts, the wind industry has never been able to stand on its own and there’s no reason to believe this will change.”**

Wind Turbine Generator Systems (WTGS) have a life of 25 years. Blades are 250-foot-long and are made of non-recyclable carbon fiber. Over 1,620,000 lbs of carbon fiber would be needed for the proposed turbine project in Northwest California. The diameter of these blades is 500 feet - although they appear to be spinning slowly, the speed at the tips of the blades varies from 180 to 200 mph. Inside, the turbines contain rare earth minerals mined in China. When these minerals are mined, equal parts radioactive waste to usable minerals are created.

Twenty to thirty percent (20 to 30%) of the electrical energy produced by turbines is lost in transmission. And the wind turbines only operate at 30-40% efficiency. At the end of the day this 155 mw project will produce significantly less power than what they claim.

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