Trees Foundation | Spring 2024

Forest and River News

Grassroots Conservation & Restoration in the Redwood Region

The Dams are Coming Down! The Klamath Will Run Free!

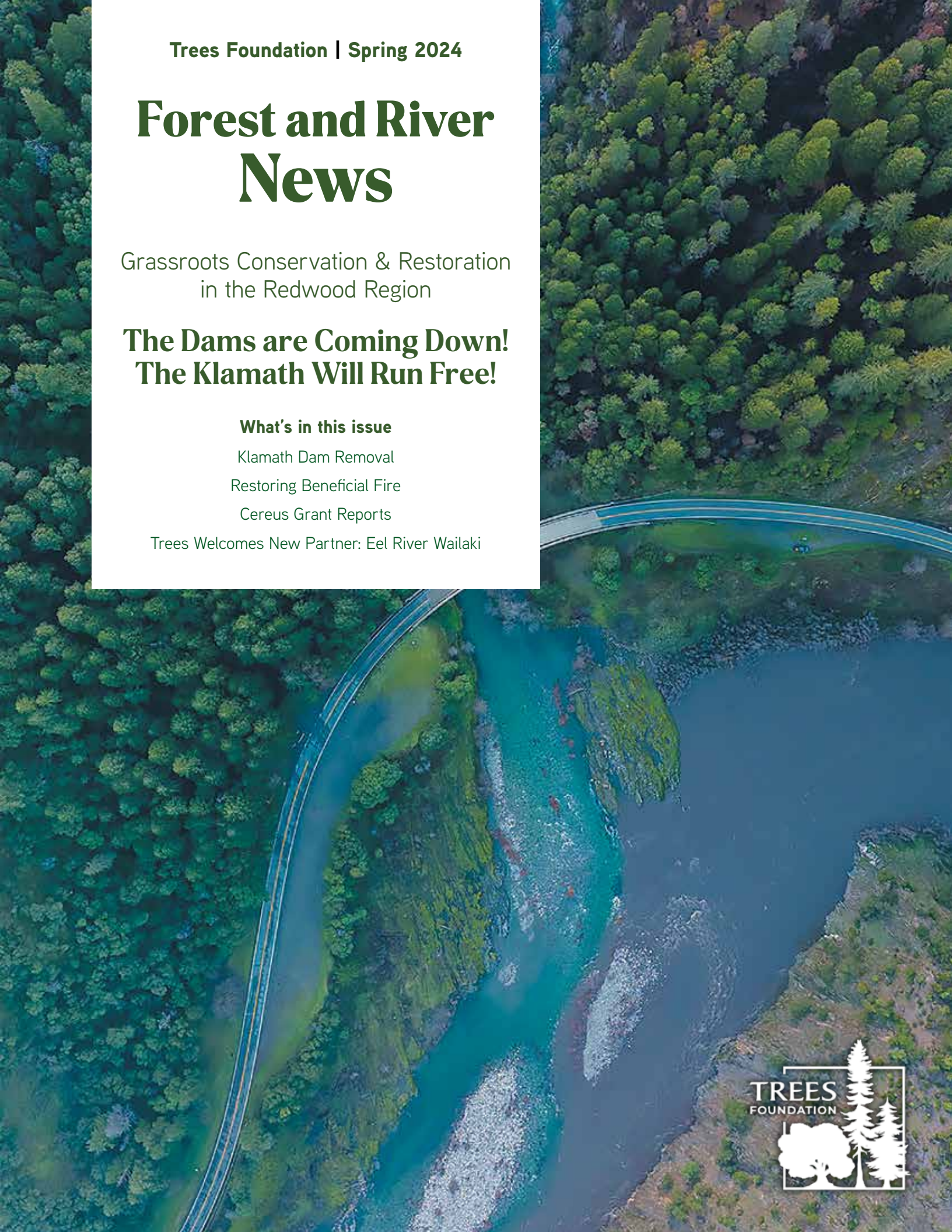
What's in this issue

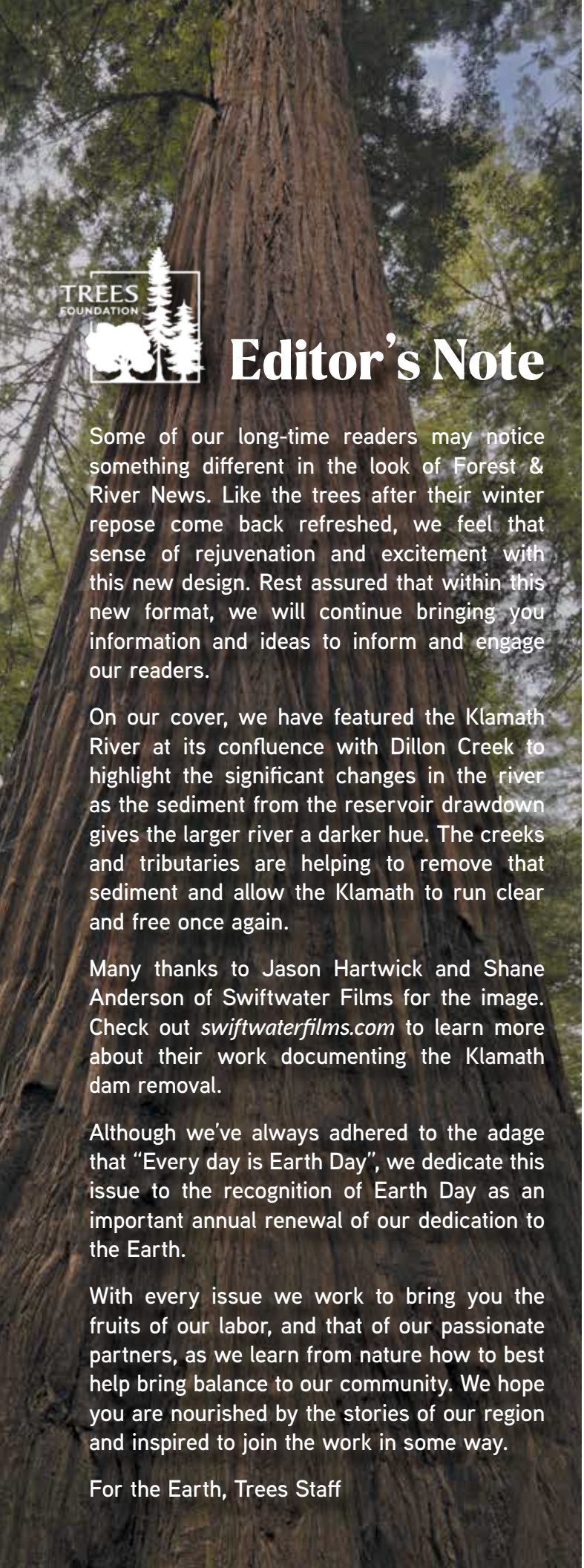
Klamath Dam Removal

Restoring Beneficial Fire

Cereus Grant Reports

Trees Welcomes New Partner: Eel River Wailaki





Editor's Note

Some of our long-time readers may notice something different in the look of Forest & River News. Like the trees after their winter repose come back refreshed, we feel that sense of rejuvenation and excitement with this new design. Rest assured that within this new format, we will continue bringing you information and ideas to inform and engage our readers.

On our cover, we have featured the Klamath River at its confluence with Dillon Creek to highlight the significant changes in the river as the sediment from the reservoir drawdown gives the larger river a darker hue. The creeks and tributaries are helping to remove that sediment and allow the Klamath to run clear and free once again.

Many thanks to Jason Hartwick and Shane Anderson of Swiftwater Films for the image. Check out *swiftwaterfilms.com* to learn more about their work documenting the Klamath dam removal.

Although we've always adhered to the adage that "Every day is Earth Day", we dedicate this issue to the recognition of Earth Day as an important annual renewal of our dedication to the Earth.

With every issue we work to bring you the fruits of our labor, and that of our passionate partners, as we learn from nature how to best help bring balance to our community. We hope you are nourished by the stories of our region and inspired to join the work in some way.

For the Earth, Trees Staff

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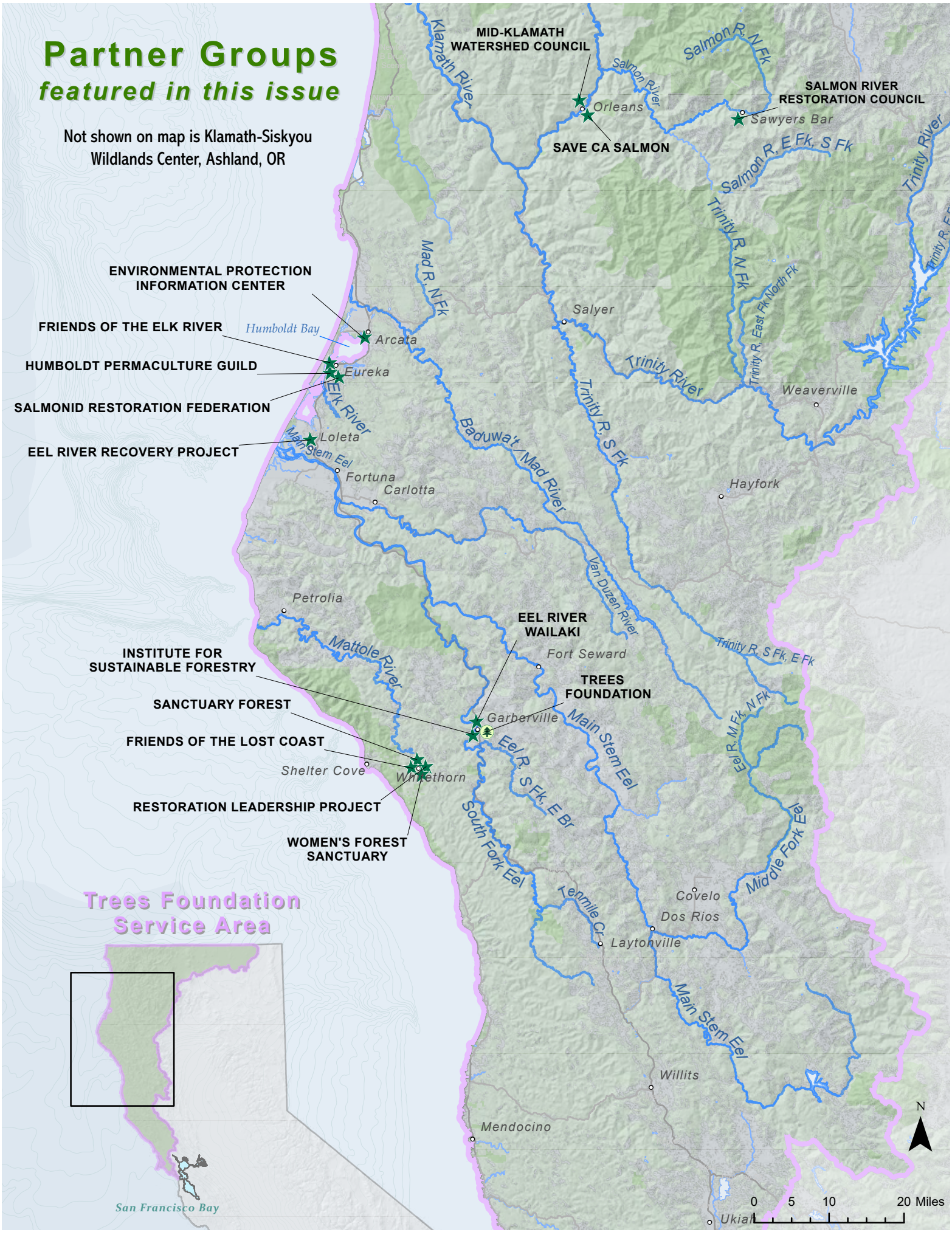
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featured in this issue
Not shown on map is Klamath-Siskyou Wildlands Center, Ashland, OR
MID-KLAMATH WATERSHED COUNCIL
SAVE CA SALMON
SALMON RIVER RESTORATION COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INFORMATION CENTER
FRIENDS OF THE ELK RIVER
HUMBOLDT PERMACULTURE GUILD
SALMONID RESTORATION FEDERATION
EEL RIVER RECOVERY PROJECT
INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY
SANCTUARY FOREST
FRIENDS OF THE LOST COAST
RESTORATION LEADERSHIP PROJECT
WOMEN'S FOREST SANCTUARY
EEL RIVER WAILAKI
TREES FOUNDATION
Trees Foundation Service Area
Klamath River
Salmon River
Salmon R, N Fk
Orleans
Sawyers Bar
Salmon R, E Fk, S Fk
Trinity River
Trinity R, N Fk
Trinity R, East Fk North Fk
Mad R, N Fk
Humboldt Bay
Arcata
Eureka
Elk River
Loleta
Main Stem Eel
Fortuna
Carlotta
Salyer
Trinity River
Weaverville
Baduwa't / Mad River
Trinity R, S Fk
Hayfork
Van Duzen River
Petrolia
Mattole River
Fort Seward
Trinity R, S Fk, E Fk
Garberville
Main Stem Eel
Eel R, M Fk, N Fk
Eel R, S Fk, E Br
Shelter Cove
Whitethorn
South Fork Eel
Middle Fork Eel
Tenmile Cr
Covelo
Dos Rios
Laytonville
Willits
Mendocino
Ukiah
San Francisco Bay
N
0 5 10 20 Miles

About Dam Time!

Downriver Communities Celebrate as Klamath Reservoir Drawdown Begins

By Regina Chichizola,
Save California Salmon

A few months after removal of the Copco 2 Dam on the Klamath River in October, 2023, Tribal members and scientists studying the river braved a cold, icy morning on January 11, 2024 to join the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) as it initiated the Iron Gate Reservoir drawdown process by opening the low-level outlet tunnel in the Iron Gate Dam for the first time in decades. "Drawdown" refers to the slow, controlled draining of water in a reservoir through tunnels located at the base of the dams. Drawdown of the JC Boyle and Copco reservoirs began last year, and all reservoirs were drained by the end of February. Then, after the rainy season ends, dam removal will begin on the remaining three dams.

Many of the Tribal representatives, government officials, downriver families, and scientists who gathered for this milestone event have worked for Klamath dam removal for more than two decades. The mood was celebratory.

"I am tremendously elated that we are able to honor our relations in such a magnificent way after decades of hard work, sacrifice, and dedication," said Karuk Tribal member Ron Reed. "We couldn't ask for anything more. As we move forward we are going to be able to

The Iron Gate Dam

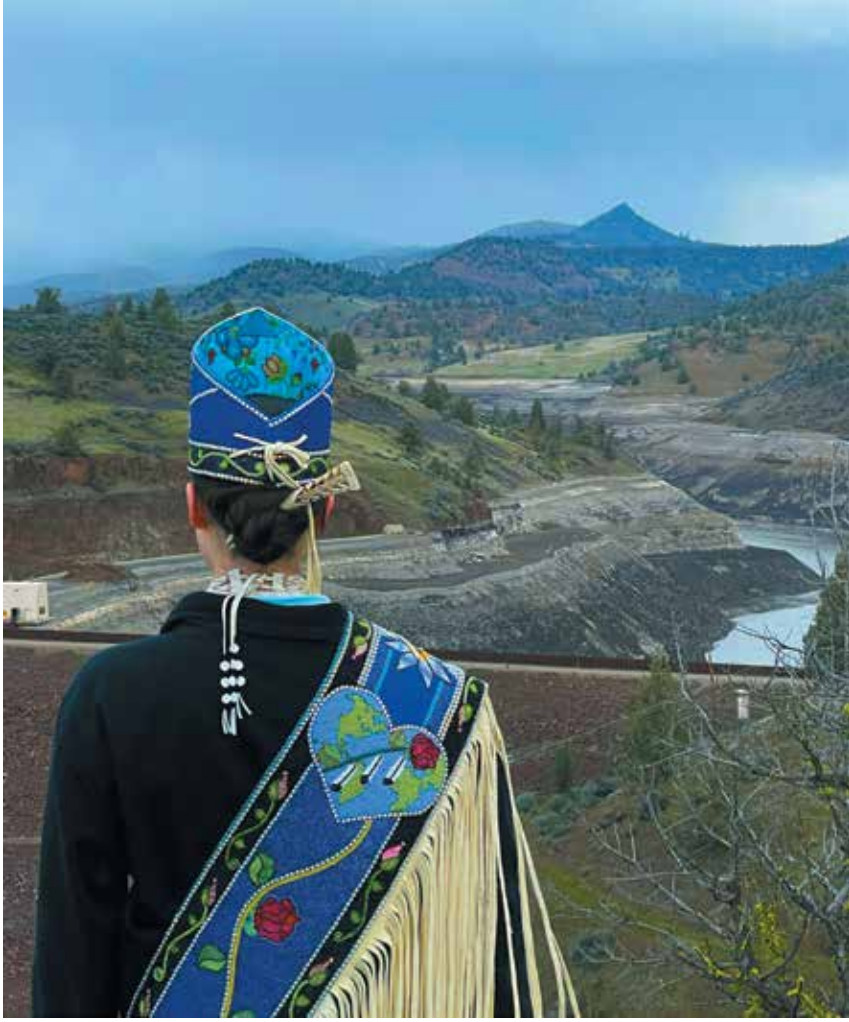
practice our Indigenous identity from this point forward. This is the end of one era, and we are moving into another. The era we are coming from is the era of extraction. We are going to the era of diversity. This is a magnificent moment. I am humbled to be here and honored at the same time."

Reed, one of the initial organizers for dam removal from the Karuk Tribe, emphasized that holders of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western scientists worked together for dam removal. He said these partnerships and the implementation of traditional knowledge are important to the future of science.

Collaboration Is Key

KRRC, which was created for the purpose of Klamath dam removal, invited five Tribes, local residents, and scientists from the California EPA, California Water Board, California Fish and Wildlife, Oregon's Natural Resource Agencies, and multiple federal agencies to see the dried-out spillway, remnants of the old fish hatchery, and gushing tunnel on this day. Many downriver residents expressed excitement that the flows from the reservoirs looked higher and cleaner than they expected. Others said they were so happy that their children will never again see salmon throwing themselves against the Iron Gate dam.

"I do believe it is a precaution to say it will be really sediment-rich. I think the river is going to clean itself very fast," Karuk Vice Chairman and fisheries scientist Kenneth Brink said as KRRC addressed questions about short-term water quality impacts from the reservoir releases.



"As we move forward we are going to be able to practice our Indigenous identity from this point forward." — Ron Reed

"Also, downriver we are used to sediment. We have had catastrophic forest fires that sent sediment down the river. The fish are used to it, we are used to it. I think we will not recognize the Klamath River [after dam removal]. I think it is going to be clean soon."

Many in the crowd agreed and pointed out that if salmon could survive the sediment releases and channel simplification from the Gold Rush, they could survive a short period of winter sediment releases. KRRC pointed out that the

"This is the end of one era, and we are moving into another. The era we are coming from is the era of extraction. We are going to the era of diversity. This is a magnificent moment. I am humbled to be here and honored at the same time."

Ron Reed

"The purpose of us coming out was to simply commemorate the next phase of restoring health to the river," stated Clayton Creager
ALL PHOTOS THIS ARTICLE BY REGINA CHICHIZOLA, SAVE CALIFORNIA SALMON

initial drawdown period was carefully selected by KRRC's Aquatic Resources Working Group, which is composed of Tribes and state and federal agencies. These scientists concluded that January and February are the ideal months for this process, as there are the fewest threatened and endangered species in the mainstem, and winter flows will assist with sediment evacuation. Others noted that in other dam removals, sediment was deposited beside the rivers and estuaries in a way that created new habitats for traditional foods.

The Next Phase

KRRC is taking every precaution to make sure drawdown is done slowly and safely, so downriver communities and species experience minimal impacts.

"Iron Gate's drawdown strategy is different than what people may have seen in the past with other dam removals," wrote Mark Bransom from KRRC in a press release. "There was no blast at this dam; instead we had the opportunity to use existing infrastructure, which allows us to precisely control the volume of water going downriver, limiting downstream impacts."

The environmental regulators and scientists at the scene were elated. "The purpose of us coming out was to simply commemorate the next phase of restoring health to the river," stated Clayton Creager, a North Coast Water Quality Control Board scientist who worked on dam-removal studies for decades. "It quickly grew via word of mouth to include many more scientists who collectively have worked on dam removal and other restoration objectives throughout the watershed."

Multiple generations of local families have been part of the movement for dam removal, and some were able to come together as families to witness drawdown. The youngest person present at the event was only one year old and was joined by her grandmother and KRRC board member (appointed by the Karuk Tribe) Wendy Ferris-George: "I began my work on the Klamath River over two decades ago. It's been a long, grueling fight for the tribal people. Many years ago we formed a grassroots coalition to take on the people who were destroying our way of life. It was the first time in modern history that tribes and traditional practitioners were able to unite on an issue. In the beginning, there was no mercy by farmers, irrigators, or

the tribes. We all came to the table ready to fight the biggest fight of our lives. At times, it was extremely challenging. There were moments of tears, fights, sadness, and plenty of milestones worth celebrating. Today is surreal. It is a historic moment in time, and I think our ancestors are proud of the work we all did."

Members of the Klamath Justice Coalition also joined the tour on that day. They brought one of the banners from the 20-year movement for dam removal to leave at Iron Gate and expressed appreciation for the many organizations that joined the movement for dam removal throughout the years, such as Ruckus Society's Indigenous People's Power Project. They voiced the hope that soon they too can celebrate dam removal [in their watersheds.] When asked how she felt about dam removal moving forward, Dania Rose Colgrove said, "It was well worth all of the trips and all of the meetings."

While the crowds at the dam were in high spirits, they also acknowledged that it has been a long, hard road to get here. "This is a new beginning," said Leaf Hillman. "I reflect back, and a lot of people who started this journey with us are not here anymore. I am proud for them, there are too many names to name. I am thinking about them and about our future generations."

For more information*: www.californiasalmon.org*

"I reflect back, and a lot of people who started this journey with us are not here anymore. I am proud for them, there are too many names to name. I am thinking about them and about our future generations."

Leaf Hillman

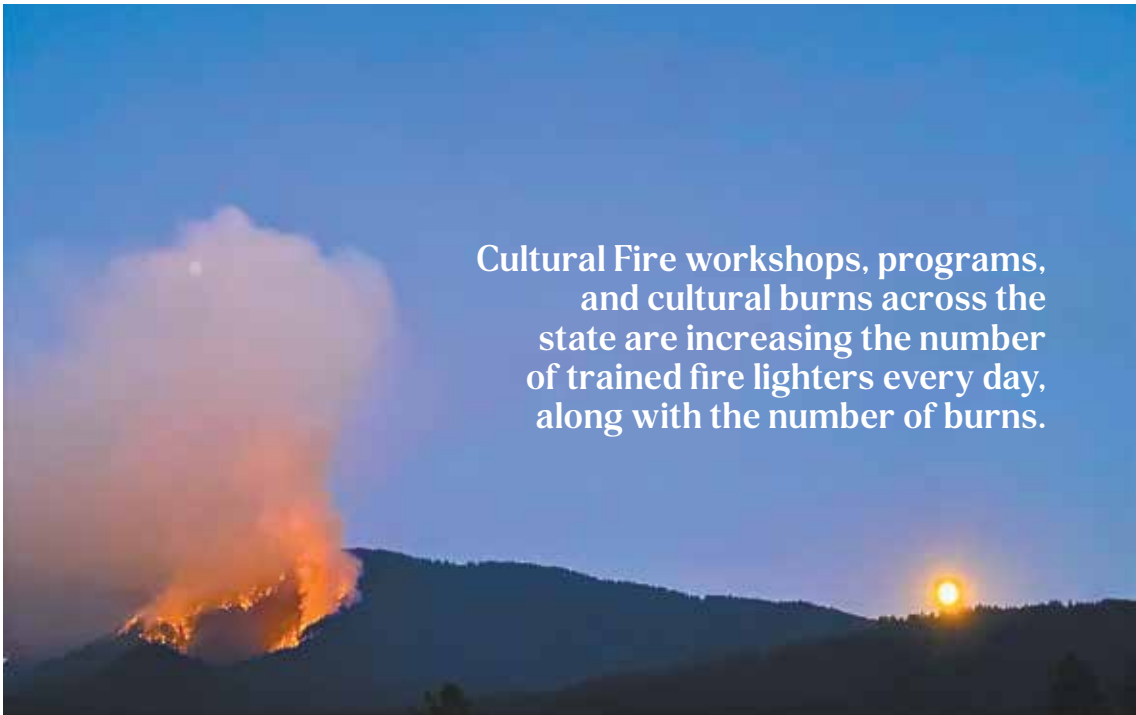
While the crowds at the dam were in high spirits, they also acknowledged that it has been a long, hard road to get here.

Restoring Beneficial Fire in the Klamath Mountains: A Long Time Coming

By Will Harling,
Mid Klamath Watershed Council

In the Klamath Mountains in California, and across the nation, 2023 was a turning point for fire. After decades of grassroots organizing underscored by ever more catastrophic wildfires that have shown the folly of attempts to take fire out of fire-dependent ecosystems, we are seeing promising gains in workforce capacity and fire policy and management. Unprecedented private, state, and federal funding is greatly expanding workforce capacity and acres treated. The Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission brought 50 leaders in fire together from around the nation who unanimously agreed to 148 recommendations to Congress on how to improve our human relationship with fire. And for the first time in recent history, federal fire managers in the Six Rivers National Forest partnered with tribes and local organizations to manage the 2023 Lightning Complex for resource objectives, even under the heading of "full suppression."

Supporting all these advances are long-term partnerships and established trust between tribes, the local, regional, and national NGOs, and aligned staff within state and federal fire agencies. Changing fire culture has been akin to slowly turning an aircraft carrier, but after several decades we are seeing more support for greatly expanding the use of beneficial fire. For example, every year the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service writes a Letter of Intent that underscores the focus of the agency in regard



Cultural Fire workshops, programs, and cultural burns across the state are increasing the number of trained fire lighters every day, along with the number of burns.

In coordination with the Six Rivers National Forest and Karuk Tribe, Brad Pietruszka and others from the Rocky Mountain Incident Management Team created a strategic firing plan that utilized drones and helicopters to take a 20,000-acre wildfire to 50,000 acres, while minimizing high-severity fire to 8% of the final acreage.

to wildfire for that season. In his 2023 letter, Chief Randy Moore stated:

> *We will also continue to use every tool available to reduce current and future wildfire impacts and create and maintain landscape resilience, including using natural ignitions at the right time and place in collaboration with tribes, communities, and partners. ...*
>
> *It is my expectation that all line officers and fire leadership will use pre-season engagement planning with their state, county, and local governments, community leaders, and partners, leveraging the best science available, including the Potential Operational Delineation (PODs) program led by Research and Development. When PODs are in place, agency administrators should ensure that incident management teams use them to inform suppression strategies; when they are not, every effort should be made to develop them in real-time as part of strategic operations.*

Junction Elementary School students and other local youth comprised the firing team on the 2023 Butler RX Burn. ALL PHOTOS THIS ARTICLE COURTESY MKWC

Using this direction as a guide, the Six Rivers National Forest chose to manage the SRF Lightning Complex fires on the Orleans and Ukonom Ranger Districts for resource benefits, aerially igniting strategic ridgelines along PODs boundaries to connect four separate wildfires just north and west of the communities of Orleans and Somes Bar. Whereas wildfires in other districts in the Six Rivers NF were suppressed through direct attack, decades of community and tribal advocacy created the social license for federal fire managers to take a different approach on the Orleans/ Ukonom Ranger Districts. Given recent high-severity wildfires, including the 2020 Slater Fire that burned 125,000 acres in one 24-hour period with over 70% burned at high severity, the 2023 SRF Lightning Complex created a powerful model for how wildfires could be managed in wet seasons to return fire to areas where it has been long absent.

The Suppression Debate Rages On

The supporters of continued fire-suppression policies also realize the danger to the suppression industry, which gives our military and healthcare systems competition for the title of Disaster Capitalism's poster child. Siskiyou County Supervisor Ray Haupt, speaking up for industrial timber interests that have long profited from publicly subsidized fire suppression, recently tried to pass a County Resolution that mandated full fire-suppression response for all wildfires in the county. Previously, the County lobbied successfully to have wildfires on mixed private and industrial timber ownership managed under Unified Command, forcing the Klamath National Forest to co-manage fires with the Siskiyou Unit of CAL FIRE, who are avid supporters of full fire suppression. As fate would have it, enough people spoke up at the County Board meeting

against the recent resolution, which flies in the face of common sense, science, and traditional fire knowledge, that the Board tabled the issue until its December 2023 meeting, and then indefinitely.

Despite local and industry attempts to delay the inevitable, change is afoot in the national fire policy arena. The final report of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, convened in 2021 by Congress to provide recommendations on solving the nation's wildfire crisis, was released in September 2023 with 148 recommendations addressing the following overarching themes below, and in the chart above.

In addition to calling for much higher levels of engagement with all parties that are affected by how fires are managed, the Commission, through the advocacy of Tribal commission members including Bill Tripp, Executive Director for the Karuk Department of Natural Resources, was able to forward significant recommendations for elevating tribes and cultural burning at all levels of government. These include:

- Remove BIA as the overseer of tribal burn programs. Fund and allow Tribes to manage their own burn programs.
- Acknowledge cultural burning in federal law and provide mechanisms for cultural burning on public lands.
- Congress should ensure that federal agencies have the capacity and authority to enter into meaningful co-stewardship and co-management authorities with Tribes on multi-jurisdictional landscapes. Note: Not so long ago, co-management was a four-letter word within federal agencies.
- Revise the 1911 Weeks Act to include Tribes in the management and restoration of fire on equal footing with states.
- Ensure that fire mitigation and management personnel are trained in and respectful of Tribal sovereignty and cultural practices. Note: This is huge in light of the disrespectful and outright racist behavior of leadership within some Incident Management Teams on the 2023 SRF Lightning Complex.

** Note: Some of these recommendations have been paraphrased.*

Together these and other recommendations provide a blueprint for a paradigm shift in how fire is managed in the United States. Commission members have been in Washington, DC meeting with legislators to advocate for these recommendations to be turned into law and policy. With bipartisan support for the Commission, there is hope this will come to pass.

The Next Generation of Fire

After 25 years of working on fire policy, many of us see clearly that change happens when there is a shared vision from the local to the national level. When I began this work, gatekeepers at multiple levels were silencing our voices, but as wildfires began to get worse and worse and our alliances grew stronger with national NGOs

like The Nature Conservancy's North American Fire Initiative and progressive state and federal fire managers, the stories of failed attempts at fire exclusion and forced cessation of Indigenous and non-agency burning reached national and international media, and policymakers began to listen in earnest. **Grassroots movements are successful when they don't forget that everyday people matter and that the change we are pushing for benefits people across all social, cultural, and economic divides. For me, this has meant focusing on engaging everyday folks in the practice of prescribed fire—in knowing fire on a deeper level in the places they live and telling these stories of hope and change.**

In December 2022, I received my state certification as a California state Burn Boss (CARX). For this to even be possible, a diverse group of fire practitioners across the state organized for several years to pass legislation mandating that CAL FIRE create this program. Subsequent legislation created a prescribed fire claims fund that provides 2 million dollars in liability coverage for CARX burners and landowners involved in these burns. On July 11, 2023, I was able to lead a small six-acre grass burn where I live at Butler Flat on the Salmon River. The local Junction Elementary School students, mine and my neighbors' kids, and other local youth (28 in total, ranging from 6 to 19 years old) were the firing team, broken into four groups. These groups were led by leaders of the Siskiyou and Humboldt PBA (a local NGO) and the Karuk Department of Natural Resources.

The author's first community burn as a CARX Burn Boss with local students and neighbors.

After 20 years of inviting youth to watch burns, having the ability to engage them in burn practices was transformative for all of us. Eric Darragh, MKWC Fire Program Director and federal Type 2 burn boss (RXB2), afterward described a moment when a seven-year-old girl was dragging a drip torch with her back to the fire, and she was about to connect her strip with another lighter and be trapped. Before he could say anything, she looked up, saw what was about to happen and did a graceful pirouette into the green and finished off the strip. In that moment, he realized the truth: that we teach fire out of our youth, that humans have an innate knowledge of fire, and that if fed, that knowledge can be restored.

We have reached a watershed moment where the dedicated work of diverse proponents of beneficial fire, led by Tribes who have held on to their relationship with fire despite nearly 200 years of persecution, has turned the political tide in California and nationally.

There is still an incredible amount of hard work to be done, and there will no doubt be setbacks along the way, but we must remember to take these moments where the change is visible to celebrate what we have accomplished together, to gather around the fire and tell stories, then get back to work!

For more information:
mkwc.org

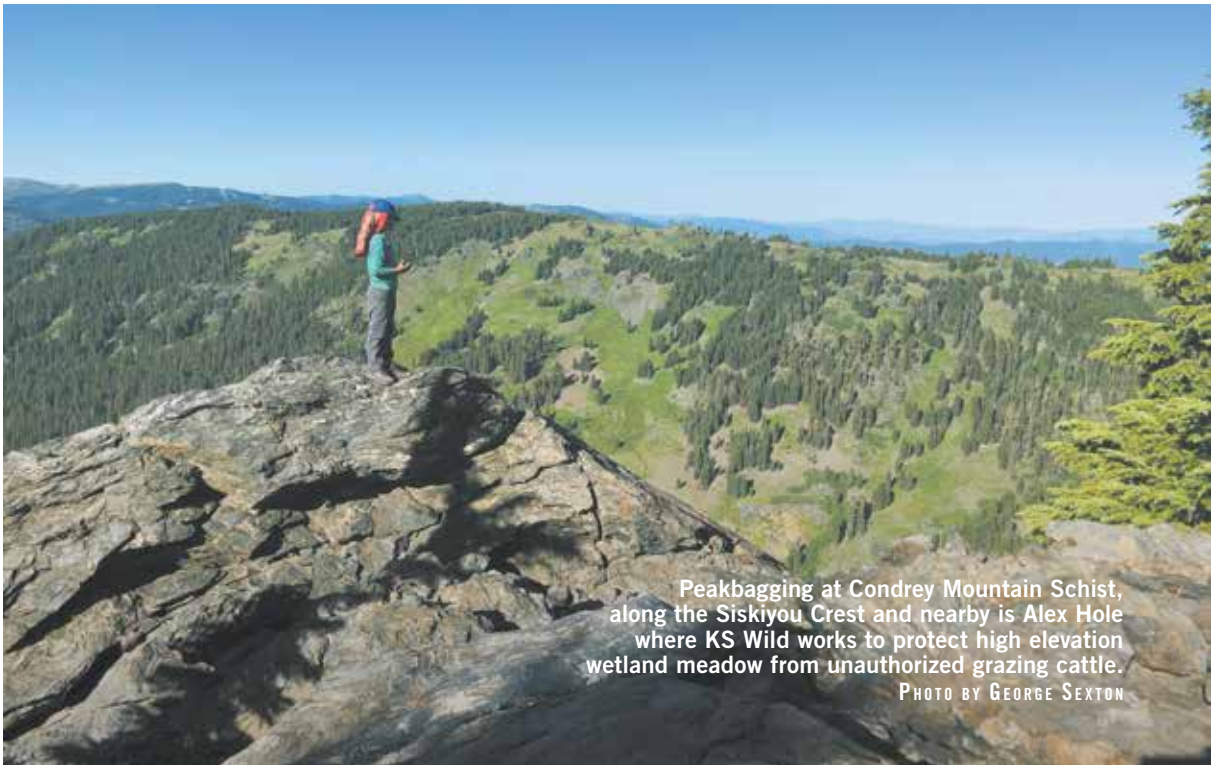
KS Wild's PLAY Program: Public Lands And You!

By Allee Gustafson,
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildands Center

What mountain range runs east to west in the Klamath Siskiyous, is an important wildlife connectivity coordinator, and is a botanically diverse hotspot? It's the Siskiyou Mountains! Located along the border of Oregon and California, they connect with the Coastal, Klamath, and Cascade mountain ranges. The Siskiyou Mountains are a biodiverse hotspot where you'll find ancient forests, fens, bogs, and meadows. The "Siskiyou Crest"—or "Crest" as it's often referred to—is accessible by Forest Service roads and filled with beauty and endless views that are captivating for either an afternoon hike along the Pacific Crest Trail or a weekend getaway in the backcountry. This recreational wonderland and biodiverse hotspot is waiting for you!

Due to the Crest's east-west orientation, it is a key habitat connection for flora and fauna that may experience alterations in their range due to climate change. In other words, we hope that by protecting and restoring the Siskiyou Crest we are providing an opportunity for wildlife and wildflowers to find their habitat niche as the climate changes, snowpack recedes, and temperatures rise. KS Wild's Public Lands And You (PLAY) stewardship program is a

Biodiverse Hotspots: Regions rich with life and deeply threatened



Peakbagging at Condrey Mountain Schist, along the Siskiyou Crest and nearby is Alex Hole where KS Wild works to protect high elevation wetland meadow from unauthorized grazing cattle.
Photo by George Sexton

Western Aster, occidentalis, found near Mt. Condrey on the Siskiyou Crest. Photo by Allee Gustafson

new program we created to empower local volunteers to steward their public lands and encourage the Forest Service to focus on restoration and partnerships rather than timber sales and grazing.

KS Wild is a watchdog organization that works within the Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest and the Klamath National Forest where the Siskiyou Crest is located. We keep an eye on timber sales, grazing allotments, mining proposals, and irresponsible off-road vehicle use—all of which present threats to the wildlands and special places on the Crest. Lately, we've been teaming up with stakeholders and volunteers to restore and protect special places that have been damaged on the Crest. We are busy working with our team to erect educational signs, build and repair fences, restore damaged areas, and monitor meadows and botanical points of interest.

To prevent degradation of the biodiversity in the Siskiyou Mountains from the misuse of off-highway vehicles, the Forest Service is supposed to implement a Travel Management Plan (TMP) and Motor Vehicle Use Map for the forest. Unfortunately, these have proven somewhat ineffective in stopping off-road vehicle damage to high-elevation meadows.

The TMP is a set of guidelines and regulations that govern motorized travel in the forest. It was first developed in 2005 in response to concerns over the impact of off-road vehicles on meadows and riparian areas. The TMP utilizes Motor Vehicle Use Maps, which are detailed maps that designate specific routes and areas where motorized travel is allowed, as well as areas where it is prohibited in the forest. However, the maps have not stopped bad actors from trashing botanical hotspots with extreme off-road vehicle use.

What Does This all Mean?

Currently, KS Wild is in the early stages of implementing a new conservation project that aims to address the issue of off-highway vehicles along the Siskiyou Crest. Poor signage, minimal enforcement, and a lack of fencing and gates should all be remedied. To achieve this, we are organizing agencies and stakeholders,

This used to be a meadow along the Siskiyou Crest, unfortunately, it has turned into a playground for off-road vehicles. Wildflowers are seen in the background.
PHOTO BY GEORGE SEXTON

including conservation partners, to urge the Forest Service to implement habitat restoration and protection. In addition, we are focused on building a strong community through volunteer restoration and monitoring projects, which will bring together people who are passionate about preserving the natural beauty and biodiversity of the area. Our ultimate goal is to create a sustainable and long-lasting team that monitors, restores, and protects the Siskiyou Crest.

For more information:
www.kswild.org or call us at 541-488-5789 if you'd like to learn more about the Siskiyou Crest and get involved in the PLAY stewardship program!

The Siskiyou Crest is closed to all vehicles going off of the road.
PHOTO BY GEORGE SEXTON

Welcome to Our New Partner Group

On February 27th the staff of Trees Foundation met with the board of Eel River Wailaki to make our partnership official! Although we have already had the opportunity to work on a variety of projects together, we are now excited to be able to offer additional support for their organization. Over the past year, our collaborations have included support for the purchase of gear for the Wailaki Cultural Fire Crew, help in the coordination of prescribed burns, and the first cultural burn in Southern Humboldt in over a century. We have also assisted with several local Native cultural events at the Mateel Community Center over the past year. We look forward to our continued collaboration on community restoration and resilience projects.

Eel River Wailaki—Our Story

Eel River Wailaki (ERW) is a non-profit organization composed of local Wailaki descendants formed to educate both Wailaki descendants, and the wider community, about our language, culture, and history.

We have a number of committees that are working on multiple items/projects:

- Economic Development through Cultural Stewardship Committee
- Ceremonial Committee
- Walaki Cultural Fire Committee
- Social Media Management
- Native American Heritage Committee
- Membership Committee
- Land Access Management
- Basket Weaving Committee
- Coral Point Committee

These committees and the projects associated with them will be discussed at our first annual Big Time gathering at the Southern Humboldt Community Park on May 25th & 26th. ERW Committee chairs will provide information and updates on what they are currently working on as well as a variety of workshops and presentations celebrating local Native culture.

Eel River Wailaki Board Members

Doyle Womack - Chairperson
Jason Franklin - Vice-Chairperson
Kenneth Chadbourne – Treasurer
Edward Viies – Secretary
Traci Speelman – Board Member
Natasha Carrico – Board Member

Contact ERW

Our social media committee is working on the website and once it is finalized, we will share it with the public. In the meantime, our Facebook is @Friends of the Eel River Wailakis

For information on how to support our Big Time gathering email us at *eelriverwailaki@gmail.com*

Project Reports
Cereus Fund

For over 23 years, with direct input from our Cereus Funder, Trees Foundation was able to grant nearly a million dollars to our Partner Groups. With the recent passing of our generous benefactor, our fundraising efforts are increasing in our hope to continue offering these kinds of grant opportunities. The following reports are from some of our partner organizations that received Cereus funding from Trees Foundation in 2023.

Eel River Recovery Project

Cereus Grant Funds Well Spent for Round Valley Elder and Youth Gathering, with Old-Growth Redwood Log Celebration

The Eel River Recovery Project (ERRP) was pleased to be awarded a Cereus Grant from Trees Foundation to help host a gathering of Native American elders and youth in early October 2023. ERRP is actively involved with the Native WAY (Walking Amongst Youth) program on youth education through working with Program Directors Michelle Merrifield and Mudcat Hoaglin in Covelo. They invited our support for the arrival of an old-growth redwood log donated by Humboldt Redwoods State Park to be carved into a traditional dugout canoe. The event was held at Hidden Oaks Park on Round Valley Tribal land in northern Mendocino County. This grant allowed ERRP to acquire 100 pounds of sockeye salmon and more nutritious and delicious food for the redwood log delivery gathering.

ERRP Managing Director Pat Higgins came down with COVID two days prior to the event but masked up to deliver the food to the Native

Round Valley youth frolic while elders commune next to the redwood log that will be made into a canoe.
Photo by Pat Higgins

WAY office the day before while maintaining a safe distance. ERRP Outreach Coordinator Lourance Hall joined Michelle Merrifield as a co-captain of the cooking team, and attendees brought potluck dishes. More than 100 people enjoyed the event on a sunny, warm afternoon under the oaks, with youth and elders well represented. The old-growth redwood log arrived, and the crowd was there to celebrate.

Friends of Elk River

A Map of Where We Live

In his essay "Watersheds as Unclaimed Territories," local writer Freeman House recalled how in the 1980s residents of the Mattole Valley surveyed their watershed and published the results in maps that showed for the first time the damage done by unregulated logging. That mapping helped set the agenda for the ensuing years of restoration. It also gave residents a picture of where they lived.

Elk River watershed has benefitted from great technical advances in mapping and statistics since the nearby Mattole residents' early efforts, but it must cope with two great disadvantages: its upper reaches are almost entirely in corporate ownership, and its well-being is managed by agencies that have assented to years of degradation and deforestation that this winter led to record levels of flooding and damage.

Response to this history is hampered by the fact that the valley has lost all its community institutions, and today a majority of its working people think of themselves as residents of suburban Eureka. For the past several years Friends of Elk River, under the umbrella of Trees Foundation and with generous local grant providers, has worked to amend this loss with events focusing on local history and the memories of long-term residents.

As part of this work, with the generousity of Trees Foundation's Cereus Grant, We also sponsored our effort to create a map of Elk River that is a picture of the watershed and its condition, to provide a point of reference for its struggling restoration program.

After many meetings and consultations with Trees' GIS Specialist Cullen Cramer, we produced a draft of a 40 x 30-inch wall map that gives residents a picture of where we live. As usual with such projects, we've had to make difficult choices about how to achieve that goal. We realized that including too many features—such as historical sites, old trails, minor roads, gulches, tributaries, and neighborhoods—would inhibit the chief purpose of creating a visually striking image, something that might find a place on our walls and in our sense of who and where we are.

So we have added to our mission many tasks that have barely begun, including a series of electronic images, available online, that will provide those resources, including images like those that galvanized the Mattole Valley of thousands of acres of approved timber harvest plans. More heartening, we have taken on another long-term process—including traditional Wiyot names in order to acknowledge not only that Hikshari' is their unceded traditional territory, but some ancient ideas of naming and land tenure.

As the Mattole residents long ago realized, even when completed this map is but one task in the work of generations.

Friends of the Lost Coast

Evergrowing Online Community

One of the ways Friends of the Lost Coast (FOLC) shares our mission of inspiring passion for nature is through our Social Media Program. Thanks to Trees Foundation's Cereus grant, in 2023, we were able to further this passion and inspire an evergrowing online community through investments in social media and the staff it takes to do this work.

The year 2023 saw solid growth and increased engagement across our social media accounts. We continued to diversify our Facebook posting topics to broaden our audience appeal and share interesting information about a wide array of Lost Coast-related subjects. We experimented with bilingual posting in an effort to increase Spanish language outreach; and we used social media to support the work of partner agencies/organizations as well as to promote our own programs, events, and fundraising efforts.

New and noteworthy things we did via social media in the last year include utilizing TikTok as a video tool to bring our varied events and educational curriculum to life. One such educational video, featuring a salt molecule lesson, recently eclipsed 5.5K views! We also participated in national public action campaigns, encouraging public support to prioritize conservation through BLM's Public Lands Rule and advocacy for BLM's Northwest CA Integrated Resource Management Plan, plus joined forces with the Conservation Lands Foundation on their Respect–Connect–Protect campaign, a fun, youth-oriented outreach effort about responsible public lands visitation. Our bilingual efforts furthered awareness in the Spanish-speaking community about our first-ever Natural Science Day event, held in Garberville in September, along with other educational programs offered to school-aged youth—outreach we plan to expand considerably in the year ahead. We also experimented with boosting important Facebook posts, which not only helped increase their reach but also netted new followers.

With the help of the Cereus grant, we surpassed our social media growth targets for the year, nearly doubling our goal for Facebook and now enjoying nearly 2.8K followers, with a cumulative reach of over 53K. We also grew our Instagram followers by approximately 20%, with a cumulative reach exceeding 8K. Interestingly, some of our most popular and far-reaching posts cover the gambit of what Friends of the Lost Coast offers, including our lighthouse lecture series, Trailhead Host events in Shelter Cove, the Summer Adventure Camp program, two of our summertime geology hikes, a community awareness post

A glorious view of the Lost Coast, looking south from King Peak in King Range National Conservation Area. Photo by Justin Crellin

about local marine mammal mortality, the Wild & Scenic Film Festival, one of our Trail Stewards workdays, and our year-end fundraising campaign. And while we featured so much more than this on our social media accounts throughout the year, what these stats teach us is useful in informing how we can maximize online engagement going forward.

The completed earthen oven, built during a 2023 workshop by the Humboldt Permaculture Guild. Photo by Levon Durr

Thanks again to the Trees Foundation's Cereus Grant for their long-running support. We at Friends of the Lost Coast are grateful for the enormous role Trees Foundation has played in our organization's growth and our ability to promote passion for nature and the Lost Coast region in the online space.

Humboldt Permaculture Guild

Cereus Grant Used for Education

The Humboldt Permaculture Guild (HPG) was the grateful recipient of a $500 grant through the Trees Foundation's Cereus Grant. Supporting our work to create resiliency in our communities, these funds enabled us to hire teachers and offer need-based scholarships for two of our summer workshops.

Our first workshop in 2023 was a two-day hands-on course in August on building an outdoor natural earthen oven. Low-cost earthen ovens can provide a community gathering place and a way to cook food without the need for electricity or gas. A diverse group of 13 participants came together on a beautiful property outside Blue Lake. We provided two of the attendees' full participation fee with funds from the grant.

The second workshop HPG offered was on food preservation in September. A wonderful group of people came together at Blue Blossom Farm just outside Eureka. The 14 participants learned basic water bath canning techniques, pickling, dehydrating, and other methods used in food preservation. Each person took home two jars of canned food they prepared during the workshop. The grant allowed us to provide two full scholarships and to purchase some of the supplies.

The Humboldt Permaculture Guild would like to thank the Trees Foundation for their continued support of our mission to live gently on the land and build a healthy climate-resilient community.

The Institute for Sustainable Forestry

Trail-Building, Signage, Native Plants, and More

The Institute for Sustainable Forestry (ISF) heartily thanks the Trees Foundation for the Cereus Grant support provided over the past two years. The money strengthened our ability to build a robust and sustainable community in our forest environment. Some examples of the work we are doing can be found at the Southern Humboldt Community Park, where we helped create hiking trails, contributed beautiful and locally made memorial redwood benches, worked to build a coalition of community members to provide educational signage (in Wailaki), established native plant gardens, initiated studies for cultural burns, engaged in oak woodland, gully, and meadow restoration, and other projects.

In addition, we have a program to encourage a new cottage industry of growing native elderberries by providing plants for local farms. We have also provided native plants for beautification and landscaping for some of our local community facilities.

We designed a community-use platform for recording, editing, and broadcasting radio stories and lectures from the many interesting people in our community who describe the underlying aspects of life in our forest community. We cover a wide array of topics such as river algae, local geology, migratory animals, mycorrhizae, native knowledge, cultural burns, oak woodlands, fire departments, HSU fire lab, natural burial, gyppo logging, and much more. These half-hour talks are all archived and available for easy listening on our website *www.insituteforsustainableforestry.com*. If you or someone you know has interesting local knowledge to share, please let us know. We, or better yet, YOU! can interview them, and after editing, have your talk broadcast on KMUD. Many thanks to the Trees Foundation for helping move our community into a fun, beautiful, and sustainable future!

Elderberry and butterfly Photo by Alla Kemelmakher

Salmon River Restoration Council

Restoring Community and Raising Stewards of the Land

A main tenet of the Salmon River Restoration Council (SRRC) since its inception has been empowering our river communities to be dedicated stewards of the places they live. Our Community Restoration Program is built around the belief that actively engaging our community, from youth to elders, in experiential learning and hands-on restoration of the landscape builds a stewardship ethic and sense of place that will sustain this watershed into the future. We strive to provide high-quality outreach materials and experiences, as well as inviting community members to share their own expertise.

In 2023, the SRRC completed its largest-ever fisheries habitat restoration project on the North Fork Salmon River. To engage the community in learning about our fisheries restoration projects, we held an Open House event during which we presented information, toured recent restoration sites, and listened to the community's thoughts and concerns. After

The Scott River Youth Environmental Summer Studies (YESS) crew joined SRRC for a week of improving fish passage into tributaries and doing manual noxious weed removal.
PHOTO FROM SRRC COLLECTION

the project was complete, we invited local youth out to the site to help finish the riparian planting and learn about the project.

Last year, our Community Restoration Program held over 45 workdays and workshops that the community was invited to participate in, including road clean-ups, noxious weed-removal workdays (without the use of toxic chemicals), fisheries monitoring and restoration, and watershed education field trips with local youth, among other events. Additional highlights of 2023 included our annual Salmon River Spring Chinook Dive and hosting the Scott River Youth Environmental Summer Studies program for a week of fisheries and riparian restoration projects. Events such as these help to increase knowledge and cooperation among diverse stakeholders, while getting community members out into the environment and actively participating in ecosystem conservation and restoration.

In 2023, we published "30 Years of Restoration: An Accomplishment Report." It's full of great articles about the history of our programs and what they've achieved over the years. You can read it on our website. We also reach our community and the greater public through our monthly e-newsletter, Salmon River Currents, *tinyurl.com/SRCurrents.*

The Women's Forest Sanctuary

Bridge Building

We are grateful to have received Cereus Funds to rebuild the footbridge at The Sacred Grove in 2023. In June of 2022, a tan oak fell in the grove, breaking the footbridge over Raven's Creek. The collapse of the bridge exposed large logs and planks buried in the creek bed for a Humboldt crossing (a past technique of putting logs directly in and across a stream to serve as a bridge for logging operations, obstructing fish passage). Seeing remnants of these embedded logs connected us more deeply with the traumatic history of logging on this land.

We spent months fostering dialogue with organizational members and neighbors in Whitethorn to discern whether rebuilding the bridge was aligned with conservation of the land. Our shared concern for the welfare of the land and care for one another became the bridge spanning our differences.

Through our extended dialogue, we learned how much our neighbors value the grove and that they bring their friends and family to experience this forest sanctuary. When we listened to the grove, we heard that the land welcomes people to commune with the forest

The completed bridge rebuilt by volunteers with The Women's Forest Sanctuary
PHOTO COURTESY WFS

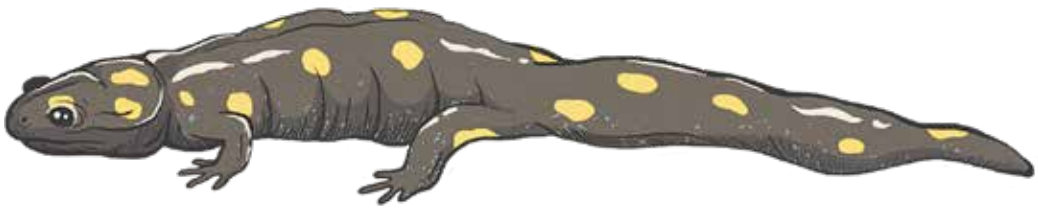
and asks that our actions respect the integrity of the land. Ultimately, we chose to rebuild the bridge to discourage erosion from the creation of new paths to cross the creek. We also wanted to support year-round ease of access to the entire span of the grove as part of our partnership with the land.

In our search for new beams for the bridge, we prioritized finding a durable material that would not leach contaminants into the stream water. Again redwood emerged as the optimal material. We were fortunate to find affordable, 26-ft-long redwood beams at Willits Redwood.

The extraordinary contributions of our neighbors were vital to the rebuilding of the bridge. Roy Baker and Cam Thompson transported the beams from Willits to Whitethorn, and along with Jim Talboy and John Taloff, they skillfully placed the beams and secured the planks to rebuild a robust bridge.

As a huge surprise to us, Roy and Jim brought 15 sturdy new stumps to the communal gathering area, replacing the old rotted seats. They also created benches and table tops in this area, making the space more welcoming for group gatherings and community building.

Rebuilding the bridge involved removing three weakened trees. While we were deeply saddened by the loss of these trees, their sacrifice makes the Humboldt crossing visible. Now the walk across the bridge reveals the grove's vulnerable past as part of its preserved presence. We are thankful to all contributors to this forest's living legacy.



Shasta River's Safe Harbor Agreement Not Safe for Salmon

By Amber Jamieson, Water Advocacy Director,
Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)

Earth Day is about protecting our planet!

The Pacific Northwest has been at the forefront of the environmental movement since its inception, helping to shape and enforce environmental laws. From forest defense to water wars, our community remains at the heart of efforts to protect our planet, beginning right here at home. One place that has recently benefited from activism is the Shasta River.

The Shasta was historically the most productive river for salmon in the Klamath Basin. Now, fish are struggling to survive. The water, mainly used to irrigate fields, is sometimes so low that it dries up and strands salmon. As a result of worsening drought conditions and increased water use, today Coho salmon numbers in the Shasta River are below the "depensation

A 1894 Bridge off of Louie Road, on CDFW Safe Harbor property, overlooking a lot of algae in the Shasta River PHOTO BY DAVID WEBB

threshold," or minimum population necessary for long-term survival.

Agencies, irrigators, and watershed groups are desperate to find a solution to water shortages in the Shasta, but this is challenging because drought conditions have intensified and water has been overallocated, with more water rights existing than actual water in the river. Many proposals and projects have purported to improve river conditions and fish habitat, but lower flows, higher water temperatures, and the continued decline of fisheries still plague the watershed.

(Not So) Safe Harbor Agreement

One such failure occurred when the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) developed a Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) in 2016 with ranchers, giving 14 irrigators permits to harm or harass Coho salmon in exchange for scant stewardship practices along their properties. The safe harbor agreement was submitted to the Federal Register on October 15, 2019. Many of the SHA projects were basic upgrades that most businesses would cover as operational costs, like installing more efficient sprinklers and lining ditches (which often results in more efficient dewatering of the river), and they were paid for with public funding. Also noteworthy is that one of the SHA participants who received public handouts is billionaire Red Emmerson, the largest landowner in the U.S. and founder of Sierra Pacific Industries lumber company.

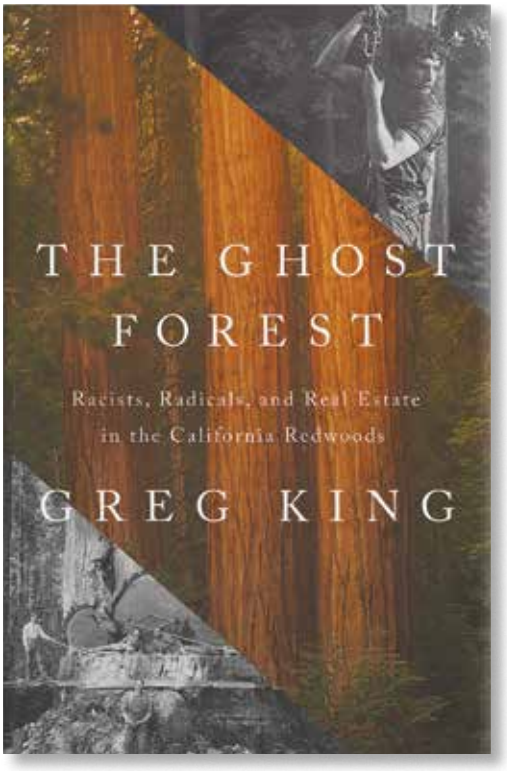
In 2022, EPIC, Friends of the Shasta, and Western Environmental Law Center sued to protect Shasta River Coho, claiming that NMFS violated the Endangered Species Act by allowing water diverters to kill threatened Coho without the SHA program ever resulting in a net benefit to Coho. In August 2023, a federal judge ruled that the SHA program did violate the Endangered Species Act and directed NMFS to prepare a new biological opinion and a more thorough environmental impact statement. Now irrigators and agencies are finally being held accountable, thanks to the thoughtful, committed groups working to protect the Shasta River.

Shasta River salmon habitat at Big Springs covered in algae. (It was once known as Puru Hey Ee by the Native-Shasta people) PHOTO BY ANDREW-MARX

For more information: *wildcalifornia.org*

Book Reviews
Green Reads

The word green evokes many concepts beyond color. Fresh, new, environmentally friendly and a sense of growth can all be conveyed by calling something green. For anyone who loves to read and has a passion for this planet we call home, these books belong on your green reading list.



The Ghost Forest

Greg King

Great storytelling invariably involves dramatic and often tragic themes. In *The Ghost Forest*, Greg King recounts a true David and Goliath tale, remarkably without any need for hyperbole. Anyone who has seen them firsthand knows that it would be impossible to overstate the enormous majesty of the last remaining old-growth redwood forests. Unfortunately, the same is true for attempting to describe the insatiable greed of Goliaths like Maxxam Lumber Co.

When King recounts his first foray into what would later become known as "All Species Grove," he eloquently describes the experience as follows:

Greg King is an award-winning journalist and activist credited with spearheading the movement to protect Headwaters Forest, in Humboldt County. King initiated the "redwood wars" following the notorious 1985 takeover of the venerable Pacific Lumber Company by the Houston energy and real estate conglomerate Maxxam. He discovered and named Headwaters Forest in 1987.

As the group scattered, I stood staring between the two trees, gazing into what I would later describe as a portal. The little creek ran in a gentle but consistent arc to the northwest. A broad curve of forest bent with it, and the tall trees formed an arboreal corridor, deep green and hundreds of feet high, wending in a perfect arc and leading toward what appeared to be the Jurassic. This order of antiquity, of scale, was so transfixing that for a moment time dissolved. Great conifers and the delicate plants they nurtured had gathered as a living tableau of primordial life so ancient, so inherently divine that, whereas I could feel the life of the forest coursing through me, never have I found words to adequately describe it.

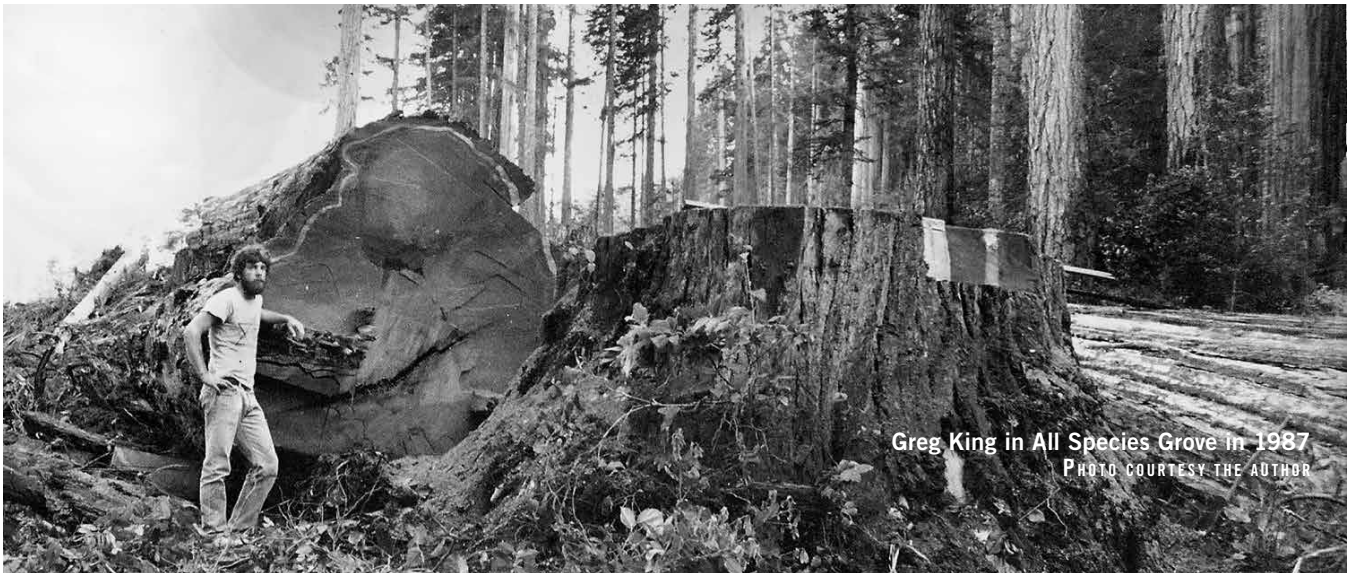
"We would put five tree-sitters high into redwoods at the ongoing clear-cut on the edge of All Species Grove."

The Ghost Forest

Although King laments the ability of mere words to convey the depth of feeling inspired by these giants of the natural world, his commitment—and the commitments of the many dedicated activists of that time—make it clear that the feeling was so incredibly profound they were willing to put their lives on the line to save the forest.

No fictional account of environmental activism and the legendary tree-sits that were undertaken in Humboldt County's ancient redwoods can hold a candle to this vivid retelling of direct action on the front lines of a literal battle for the fate of the planet. King brackets the local history of lumber barons and crony capitalism with his personal story of environmental activism. He takes us on a deep dive into the history of the North Coast to a time some benignly refer to as "contact" although, for the people and the ecosystems here, it would be more aptly called a time of devastating and brutal conquest. Nearly 2 million acres of destruction, and what appears to be the first "greenwashing" by a certain corporate-led environmental organization, are detailed in these pages.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the purchase and transfer of two ancient groves in Headwaters Forest into public ownership. Additionally, in that agreement, some of the surrounding forest was granted protection for 50 years. For that reason this is a good time to be reminded about the important history of what became known as the "Timber Wars" of the 1980s and the tireless work that resulted in the preservation (and temporary protection) of some of Headwaters Forest. If the future is anything like the past, we had better get started advocating for the permanent protection of those groves now!



Greg King in All Species Grove in 1987
PHOTO COURTESY THE AUTHOR

A Watershed Runs Through You

Freeman House

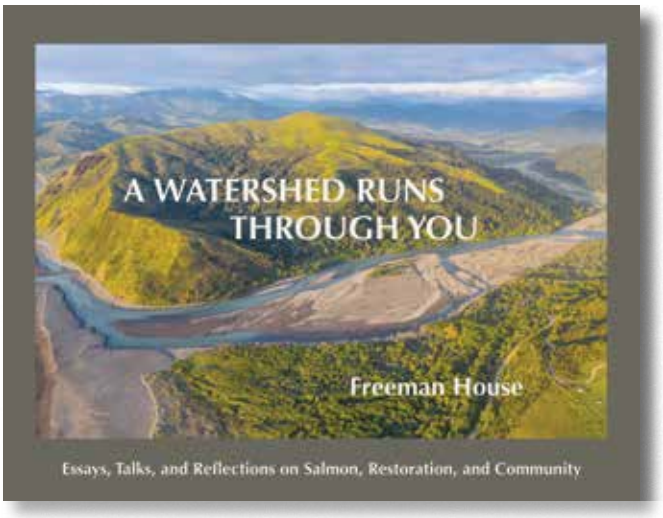
Freeman House, co-founder of Mattole Restoration Council and celebrated author of *Totem Salmon: Life Lessons From Another Species*, was often invited to address colleges and conservation societies, planners and restoration groups about the central place of salmon in the life of this region. Recipient of a Lannan Fellowship and national awards for the quality of his writing, he also co-authored a history of Humboldt County and advocated for the role of local residents in the recovery and stewardship of our watersheds: "The beauty of hands-on watershed restoration is that it allows the place itself to become our teacher."

A Watershed Runs Through You collects twenty-one essays and talks preserved by Freeman's daughter, Laurel Fanya House, edited by local poet Jerry Martien, with a preface by acclaimed bioregional activist and author Stephanie Mills, and an afterword and salmon update by Ali Freedlund of the Mattole Restoration Council. Published by Empty Bowl Press and designed by Sitka Willow Design, with more than 300 wide-format pages, the book's cover features a photo of the mouth of the Mattole by MRC staff member Hugh McGee.

An excerpt from the essay:

"Restoring Relations: The Vernacular Approach to Ecological Restoration"

In the course of my work in the Mattole watershed of Northern California over the past fifteen years, I've been trying to understand how ecosystem wisdom expresses itself in the human community. The picture I get,



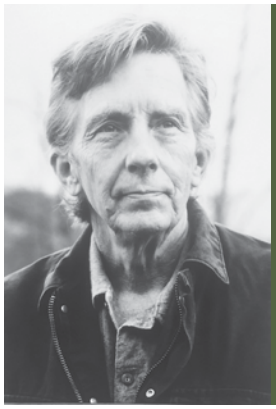
throughout human history and prehistory, is that ecosystem wisdom expresses itself through the vernacular, through local custom and taboo, through the ways that people act collectively and daily in response to the opportunities and constraints provided by their local ecosystems.

Let's look at this word vernacular for a moment. A few definitions from the New Webster's: One: Native or originating in the place of its occurrence or use, as language or words, as opposed to literary or learned language. Another: Native or peculiar to a place, as a style of architecture. Another: The common language people use every day. **Vernacular relationships explain why there are so many native languages in California**. Vernacular cuisine is the recipes that grow out of regional and seasonal availabilities of certain foods. My wife and I learn more about local weather patterns hanging out the laundry than we ever could from computer models or textbooks. And this is vernacular education.

An important survival mechanism of vernacular culture is its use of story. Vernacular culture maintains its continuity through keeping its stories alive, a sort of enduring gossip. All cultures invent ways to pass on the collective memory in order to maintain a continuous sense of themselves. When the stories of vernacular culture are replaced by the

cunningly crafted televised myths of consumer culture, then local people will tend to lose the direct sense of relation to local places. Engagement in environmental restoration can reorient inhabitants to locale, but only if open communication is considered as a primary element of any ecological restoration process. In our local watershed rehabilitation work, we try to think ahead fifty years or more, a span of a couple of generations. Since less than 5 percent of the local population is actually engaged in the restoration work (and many of us are getting on in years), we feel compelled to keep the rest of the inhabitants informed through occasional newsletters, reports, and studies that are sent not only to our supporters and subscribers, but to every one of some three thousand watershed residents and landowners. **This kind of contact with the community needs to be part of the budget of restoration programs. Without it, ecological restoration fails to realize its potential for social transformation.** With open and regular communication, our neighbors can come to realize themselves as a recovering population in a recovering ecosystem, and the new local story acts to recruit the young as self-identified participants in an emerging culture.

The full essay is based on a keynote talk, Society for Ecological Restoration annual conference, Nevada City, 1994. Published in Restoration & Management Notes (Summer 1996). Posted to Arthurmag.com 2010–11, 2013–14. Courtesy of Empty Bowl Press and the trustees of the Nina Blasenheim and Freeman House Living Trust.



Freeman House was a social activist and commercial fisherman turned watershed restorationist who cofounded the Mattole Restoration Council and Mattole Salmon Group on the Mattole and Sinkyone ancestral lands of Northern California. He passed away in 2018 at the age of eighty, leaving a tremendous legacy of bioregional awareness and communitybased environmental organizing through his decades worth of writings and the organizations that uphold his visions to this day.

Evergreen

Nathan Hutchinson

Evergreen is a stunning book of art and existential meditations on the future of the temperate rainforests of the Pacific region we call home. We are honored to be on a short list of environmental organizations that artist Nathan Hutchinson has decided to support with profits from the sale of his book. You can find out more at *nathanhutchinson.com*

Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health Grant

Planning for Action

By Pat Higgins, ERRP Managing Director

The Eel River Recovery Project (ERRP) is the recipient of a CAL FIRE Climate Change Initiative (CCI) grant awarded in August 2023 that runs through March 2028. More than 818 acres of forest land will be treated using thinning from below and prescribed fire. Acquisition of the grant and ERRP's ability to perform are due to the local talent that coalesced, worked to shape the proposal, and formed the implementation team. The Cahto Tribe requested to be part of the project, and work to improve forest health on the Cahto Rancheria is included.

Before full-scale implementation can take place, permits will be obtained by August 2024 under the California Vegetation Treatment Program and pending approval of a team of consultants. In the short term, ERRP is pursuing a 50-acre Forest Fire Prevention Exemption Permit (FFPE) so that crews can start work before CEQA and NEPA permits are completed. Work on the ground will be accomplished in part by Elk Ridge Tree Service, which helped plan the forest health prescriptions. The firm contracts local workers exclusively and

ERRP and Elk Ridge Tree Service Team on Febuary 15, 2024, in the Usal Forest with (l to r) Will Emerson, Willie Grover, Ben O'Neil, Steve Brown, and Jessica Martinelli. Forest behind the group is pre-treatment.

An example of a pre-treatment patch of Usal Forest near Highway 1, with conifers and hardwoods closely spaced and huckleberry growing profusely. This stand has extremely high fire risk, as small trees and brush create ladder fuels that are often linked to catastrophic fire. Huckleberry bushes may attain a height of 10 feet under ideal growing conditions following previous cycles of logging.

recently completed 250 acres of thinning on the Usal Forest for the Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc. (RFFI), which was part of another CCI grant acquired by the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District. Hybrid Indigenous Stewardship is a Willits-based firm that employs forest health prescriptions based on Traditional Ecological Knowledge and hires Cahto Tribal members. They will also be contracted for work after permits are acquired.

Implementation Plans

The overarching goal of the project is to restore the ecological health of the Tenmile Creek watershed by taking full advantage of forest health resources. Logs and woody material can be used to heal gullies in meadows and forested hillslopes, raising the water table and making restoration of native grasses and plants possible. Stream channels can be rebuilt using wood from forest health thinning to restore habitat complexity and the hydrology of creeks tractor-logged after WW II. In addition, medium-diameter poles could be used for log-pole home construction, with the Forest Reciprocity Group (FRG) exploring that potential. Smaller-diameter wood could make excellent furniture or be used for carving and fine art, an enterprise that the Northern Mendocino Ecosystem Recovery Alliance (NM ERA) is considering at Tan Oak Park.

CCI grants are funded by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund using proceeds from the state of California's cap-and-trade program. This means that funding for forest health is buffered

An example of a shaded fuel break right off of Highway 1 on the Usal Forest, which is owned by RFFI. This lessens the chance of a human caused ignition along the road from spreading to nearby wildlands. Fuels have been stacked in nearby forest openings and piles will be burned during wet weather windows. In the long term, the site will be maintained with routine prescribed burns. ALL PHOTOS THIS ARTICLE BY PAT HIGGINS

from the state budget crisis, and more money will be available. ERRP feels fortunate to be breaking trails in the Tenmile Creek watershed, and we hope other groups continue to organize so we can acquire even more resources to fix our forests and watersheds.

Project Partners

ERRP contractors assisting with outreach, education, and oversight include Bell Springs Volunteer Fire Department Chief Will Emerson, Cheyenne Clarke, and Jessica Martinelli, all three of whom are also on the Board of the Northern Mendocino Ecosystem Recovery Alliance. Eric Lassotovich of FRG is contracted to help identify ways to integrate wood waste back into the soil in bioswales. Lower Tenmile Creek landowner and forest health practitioner Steve Brown is also under contract and will play a strategic role in coordinating use of prescribed fire. Scot Steinbring of Torchbearr (*www.torchbearr.org*) is the project Burn Boss and will put together the overarching plans for prescribed burns over the five-year project. The Mendocino County RCD is assisting with fiscal oversight and also quality assurance and quality control, checking forest health work in the field.

The Eel River Recovery Project works to assist citizen monitors with taking the pulse of the Eel River and to collaborate to craft and implement ecological restoration strategies. For more information:

www.eelriverrecovery.org

Plant Notes

California Buckeye

Aesculus californica

One of the first native plants to leaf out each year is California buckeye. Buckeyes don't even wait for spring, leafing out in mid-winter, when moisture from rains is abundant. In California's dry summer climate, many native plants have adapted to grow during the wet season and go dormant in the dry season; buckeye is a good example of this. By the first heat wave of summer, buckeyes' leaves begin to turn brown and wither, reducing the tree's need for water.

Buckeye leaves are up to seven inches around and are composed of five to seven leaflets arranged palmately (roughly like the shape of your hand). In spring, showy panicles of white to pale pink flowers appear. The fruit is borne at the tip of the flower panicle; and when the husk comes off, the nut inside is hard, brown, and shiny, about two inches in diameter. Nuts fall off the tree in early fall, and with the rains, they sprout a long taproot that finds its way into the earth. A stem then arises that leafs out with a crown of deep green leaves, and a new tree is born.

Native bees that evolved with buckeye are attracted to the flowers, which are toxic to European honeybees (they are not resistant). Hummingbirds and butterflies also visit the flowers for nectar.

Panicle:
a loose branching cluster of flowers.

All photos this article by Cheryl Lisen

Palmate:
used to describe a type of leaf composed of small leaves like the fingers of an open hand.

All parts of the plant are toxic, but for many of California's tribes, buckeye has a variety of uses when properly processed. According to historian, storyteller, and respected friend of the Wailaki, Ben Schill, "Buckeyes...were peeled and mashed with a stone then washed over and over again until the bitterness was gone. Once rinsed, I believe they were roasted in patties, like acorn bread." Buckeye soup was also made from the seeds. Ben further notes, "The great importance of buckeye is that it was [said] to have fire in it. The wood was used to make fire by friction."

Buckeye seed

Generally growing on slopes along canyons and streamsides, buckeyes seek the forest edge or the dappled shade of oak woodlands. Occasionally, they grow on the valley floor. It is here that they reach heights up to 40 feet. More commonly, buckeyes are small trees or large shrubs, growing from 10 to 20 feet tall. They are endemic to California, ranging from the foothills and valleys of the Coast Ranges to the Central Valley, the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada, and as far south as Irvine. Buckeye is in the *Sapindaceae* Family, along with horse-chestnut, lychee, and golden rain tree.

Cheryl Lisin is a native plant enthusiast, landscape designer, and Vice President of Friends of the Lost Coast. She is currently working on a native plant garden at the King Range BLM office for the education and enjoyment of all. You can contact her at *Cheryl@lostcoast.org*. You can find more stories about the Native American People of Northern California at *benschill.com*

Living with Fire
Forest Health and Fire Resources Program Update

Southern Humboldt Forest Health and Wildfire Resilience Project

The Trees Foundation Forest Health and Fire Resources Program has been hard at work in 2024. We began the year collaborating with project partners California State Parks, Humboldt Redwood Company, Briceland Fire, Elk Ridge Forestry, Eel River Wailaki (ERW), Native Health in Native Hands (NHNH), and numerous private landowners to assist the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District in submitting an application to the CAL FIRE Forest Health Program for nearly $7 million of fuels reduction implementation on Mail Ridge and Salmon Creek. Trees is very excited about the project and is hopeful to hear positive news back in April. If awarded, this project would provide funding for the first phase of a 54-mile fuel break utilizing beneficial fire as a tool to treat nearly 3,000 acres. Funding to develop this project is provided by State Coastal Conservancy.

SoHumPark

Trees has also been working with Institute for Sustainable Forestry (ISF), the Southern Humboldt Community Park (SoHumPark), Native Health in Native Hands (NHNH), Symbiotic Restoration, and others to develop a cultural land management plan for SoHumPark. This plan will focus on cultural burning, native plant nurseries and seed gardens, and gulley restoration in the park. The project team aims to see SoHumPark adopt the collaborative plan, and leverage it to pursue grant funding for future implementation. Funding for this planning project comes from the North Coast Resource Partnership's Technical Assistance Program.

Tenaa Events at SoHumPark

Trees has assisted with two special events put on by NHNH at the SoHumPark that both celebrated the remarkable plant, tenaa, or dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*). This purple-hued annual grows 2-4 feet tall in select damp areas and is a fantastic source of fibers that can be used to make string. On January 17th, Tamara Wilder of Paleotechnics led a Primitive Fiber Arts Fair that showcased the plant and taught participants how to make their own

Burning tenaa, also known as dogbane, when it is dormant helps clean up decaying stalks, adds nutrients to the soil, and can help reduce competing grasses. PHOTO BY ALICIA BALES

string from the fibrous cambium layer of the tenaa stalks. On February 12, as part of research for the development of a cultural burn plan, Trees Foundation and Wailaki Cultural Fire assisted NHNH in burning a small patch of dogbane at the SoHumPark. Burning tenaa when it is dormant helps clean up decaying stalks, adds nutrients to the soil, and can help reduce competing grasses. The area will be monitored to see the effect over the coming year. Funding to assist with these projects is provided by State Coastal Conservancy.

If you would like to get in touch with Native Health in Native Hands, go to *nativehealthinnativehands.org*

Chipper Days & Defensible Space Project

The remaining Chipper Days are being scheduled for March and April 2024. Residents in the greater Southern Humboldt and Shelter Cove areas who want to learn more about this free chipping service can visit *SoHumFireSafe.org*. Last year, this grant-funded project succeeded in chipping 900 piles, equivalent to 5,700 cubic yards of woody debris, reaching project objectives and making the region better prepared for wildfire. Trees Foundation staff played a part by doing public outreach and coordinating chipping services for 63 landowners in 2023.

As of spring 2024, defensible space work utilizing this same grant funding is well underway. Trees Foundation staff have identified landowners for inclusion in the project and completed Home Risk Assessments in Benbow and Salmon Creek, with fuels reduction work scheduled to commence in April. This service is provided free of charge to selected landowners who would otherwise not be able to do the work themselves.

Support for these programs comes from the Humboldt County Department of Public Works on behalf of the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council and in partnership with the Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District, Trees Foundation, and Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council. Funding for this program is provided by CAL FIRE's Fire Prevention Program through the California Climate Investments Program.

Wailaki Fire Crew Update

By Natasha Carrico

We are a crew of Wailaki natives that have come together with other local agencies to offer safe, effective support for cultural fire and prescribed fire. Our goal is to provide our community access to traditional fire practices for land management by using fire to restore resources and habitats within our native homeland. We have several projects planned for this year.

For more information or get involved, follow us on Facebook @Wailaki Cultural Fire or email us at *wailakiculturalfire@gmail.com*

Shelter Cove Wildfire Resiliency and Community Defense Project

In February, Trees' Forest Health and Fire Resources Program submitted a proposal to provide Project Coordination services to the Shelter Cove RID #1 for their Shelter Cove Wildfire Resiliency and Community Defense Project (SCWRCDP). This multi-year, $6 million grant project will provide defensible space assistance to all homes in the Cove, including adjacent lots and additional greenbelt, increasing wildfire resilience for the Shelter Cove Community, and also providing employment opportunities to the greater area. Funding for this project is provided by the USDA with support from the U.S. Forest Service.

For more inforamtion on any of these programs, email *frc@treesfoudnation.org*

Diggin' In
The Richard Gienger Report

The following is an open letter I wrote in early December 2023. It remains valid today and in the coming months and years as an effort to reform ("modernize") forest stewardship that includes a model of co-management. Perhaps the most appropriate and pressing place to achieve this is the 50,000-acre Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF). The issues need the light of day, education, public awareness, and participation to achieve a high-standard model that is essential for future forests in California.

A CLARION CALL

The Struggle in Jackson Demonstration State Forest for Real Forest Conservation and Protection, Real Relationship Reform, and Real Co-Management: A Model & Template for the Future of California Forests and People

To Whom It May Concern:

This is not a simple matter, but it needs your attention and participation. You may be vague on all details, the history of centuries, the history since World War II, and the particulars of cultural impacts on forests and people.

To be extremely brief: The forests and peoples of North America were systematically adversely impacted from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Before, during, and after any gold rush there was the almost complete economic exploitation of the forest. (For a strikingly horrifying portrayal of this, read *Barkskins* by Annie Proulx.)

Jumping to the West Coast, as did the "timber barons," from Pennsylvania to Michigan, to Washington State, Oregon, and California in the 19th century: Company towns and the unrelenting logging of the incredible large trees and ancient conifer forests did not really end until those forests and trees were gone, with few exceptions. Official studies in California projected "terminal depletion" by the late 1970s, which was basically confirmed.

After WWII the timber rush was on for real to feed the post-war building boom. There has been and continues to be no meaningful regulation to protect and conserve forests, water, wildlife, cultural heritage, and soil. I heard from former CAL FIRE Director Richard Wilson, an outstanding conservationist, that when timber industry leaders met close to the end of the war they were spoken to by Emanual Fritz. Professor Fritz lived to be over 100, passing in 1988, and was one of the most influential persons in engagement with forests on a professional and ethical basis. Instead of the expected thanks for the industry's support of the war effort, Fritz encouraged them to support acquiring the vast areas of cutover, burned-over forests in California for a State Forest system. The industry basically dug in its heels to try to prevent this type of State Forest after acquisition of the 50,000-acre Jackson Demonstration State Forest. On top of this, the California legislature passed into law and policy in 1946 the ad valorem tax whereby

Current forest removal (above) and proposed cutting (right) of very large trees in JDSF.
PHOTOS COURTESY MENDOCINO TRAILS STEWARDS

forest landowners were taxed yearly on their standing timber until 70% was cut. This tax was in place until 1976.

After the massive damage, especially to areas where tractor-logging had mauled cutover forests was intensified by the 1955 and 1964 100-year floods, it was obvious that serious change was necessary and California responded. Nationally similar and parallel changes occurred. All of a sudden you needed more than a caterpillar tractor and a chainsaw, and the ability to use them, to take the forest down.

There have been many books, investigations, and reports done regarding the California forest situation, from before the passage of the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 to the present. I recommend your careful and judicious immersion in all that with adequate breaks and fresh air. Despite the multidisciplinary review and standards ostensibly in place now, the high-stakes pressure exerted by industry during the writing of the 1973 FPA resulted in a system not based on prescribed standards but on "professional discretion." Although certain essential reforms were made (like the usual size of clearcuts reduced from 120 to 30 acres), and the taboo against no-cut stream buffers broken, the dominant industry model is now 30-acre clearcuts every 45 years.

Enter Jackson Demonstration State Forest, the largest and flagship forest of the State Forest system: It has had an ebb and flow of controversy since its purchase of almost 50,000 acres in 1947, and its establishment as a demonstration forest in 1949. It was first criticized as worthless cutover land, to not being logged enough, to having scientific value, to having "economic fingers" on the scale of that value. It gets pretty complicated and contentious. JDSF does have quite a scope of public "multiple uses," including two

Adult Coho salmon pair on South Fork Ten Mile River, January 05, 2024. PHOTO BY BRIANNA ORDUNG, CDFW

Conservation (Fire) Camps run by the California Department of Correction and Rehabilitation jointly with CAL FIRE, the National Historic Landmark Mendocino Woodlands State Park, the Caspar Creek Experimental Watershed (partners Pacific Southwest Research Station [PSW] of the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE), an extensive campsite and trails system, and a lot of "working forest" under variable protections and impacts.*

*For an extensive overview of Jackson written by the acclaimed and accomplished William Lemos, go to this link: *tinyurl.com/HowManySalmonEggs* for "How Many Salmon Eggs per Board Foot Problem."

The public continues to be skeptical of the adequacy of Jackson's forest management. Sound litigation by Vince Taylor and the Campaign to Restore Jackson State Forest challenged Jackson's inadequate management plan and stopped timber operations from 2001 to 2008. (For more complete facts and perspective, see Trees Foundation's website, *tinyurl.com/ThenandNowCRJSF*).

The upshot is that the command and control structure of CAL FIRE and the Board of Forestry over the Jackson Advisory Group (JAG) remains in place. The same structure that overrode the five-year hard-achieved consensus for a new management plan in 2011 by the JAG is ready to clamp down again. That structure includes a lack of transparency as well as a lack of effective, equitable, meaningful public and tribal participation; with an overriding commitment to timber production.

The crucial context is the hard trail to transform the "business-as-usual" resource extraction and plantation/industrial juggernaut into long-term relationships that allow real recovery of forests, watersheds, and human (and beyond human) life—a multigenerational social and cultural reconnection. If this sounds too "woo-woo," you haven't worked to challenge the accepted depredation of the forests, waters, hillsides, and people, which has been gradually changed in some places, some of the time. Many are under the impression that JDSF is at the forefront of good forest management, despite immense redwood logs on logging trucks that dwarf the normal bundles of small logs from large private industrial operations. This is a nearsighted and entirely incomplete estimation of the value of JDSF and the value it has as a model and goalpost for the future.

Management of Jackson is way behind the curve to respond to basic adjustments for climate impacts. It is also way behind on comprehensive efforts for watershed and stream and road impact recovery. A big deal is made to correct a road at a stream crossing that has been illegally blocking anadromous

salmonid passage for decades. Where is the blueprint example for forest and watershed recovery on the whole of Jackson that is feasible and transferable?

In large part the recent focus, and essentially a Second Campaign to Restore Jackson State Forest, began in March 2020 when some of the Mendocino Trail Stewards became deeply alarmed by massive redwood trees (some over 6 feet in diameter) marked for cutting along some of their favorite trails. Resistance to Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) picked up, and some folks from the region and beyond undertook non-violent civil defense.

This shows the special headwaters of the Mainstem Eel River above the Scott Dam (forground). About 288 miles of salmon and steelhead habitat has been blocked for more than a century. PHOTO BY ECOFLIGHT

Part of the response was the call for changing the almost exclusively timber-cutting mandate of the legislation creating JDSF. Along with this response was the initiative taken by the Coyote Valley Pomo to protect cultural and sacred sites—and to implement Governor Gavin Newsom's 2020 Statement of Administrative Policy: ". . . it is the policy of this administration to encourage every State agency, department, board, and commission, subject to my executive control to seek opportunities to support California tribes' co-management of and access to natural lands that are within a California tribe's ancestral land and under the ownership or control of the State of California."

All this shook up accustomed norms for the politicians and administrators. THP operations were affected, and some were curtailed. Inadequate measures had been taken and cultural sites were not protected to the degree that those affected deemed necessary. The Betts Report (1999), which called for no operations until cultural impacts, especially by roads, were corrected or avoided, had been ignored.

There continue to be multiple events, responses, and counter-responses. The JAG meetings and critical THP issues are all orchestrated by CAL FIRE and BoF in attempts to maintain the status quo and set tribal and public interests against one another. With fancy language help from the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), up popped the "New Vision" paper (little or no public/tribal role) claiming that great things were being done to basically continue approvals THP by THP, project by project, if adherence to the "New Vision" could be alleged. It was a masterpiece of propaganda. For details search "Jackson" at *wildfiretaskforce.org*. In an August 2022 press release CAL FIRE trumpets "a renewed focus on climate science, restoration ecology and a new model for tribal co-management," yet implementation of these claims is flawed or lacking.

This "New Vision" actually further postponed timely transparent and participatory progress for getting a new/modernized management plan with co-management so that broad reforms could be implemented. The generally short-sighted, small view, small-scope actions

The Scoop

- Some substantive Coho runs occurred in some North Coast streams this season, including tributaries of Indian Creek whose confluence with the South Fork Eel River is directly across from old Piercy.
- Regionally heavy rain, snow, and high-impact storms that could result in more flooding, topographical changes, and damage to homes may continue until late spring. One recent violent storm resulted in lightning shattering a tree next to the Leggett Post Office, leading to its destruction by fire.
- The 3,000 acres acquired by Save-the-Redwoods League along the coast between Usal and Rockport, including Cottoneva Creek, may well become an example of co-management and/or landback with tribes.
- The three dams remaining in the Klamath will be removed this year. The first was taken out in 2023. Removal of the two dams on the upper Eel River may be accomplished within several years as well!
- The California Department of Fish & Wildlife is making available forms to apply for beaver transmigration to Coho streams near you. Step up and fill one out with your watershed neighbors. CFW Beaver site: *wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Beaver*
- The Wailaki and other tribes along the Eel River and elsewhere are working to keep the proposed Redwood Trail from adversely threatening cultural heritage, health, and human safety through a flawed process with no basic, from the get-go, consultation on the most remote portions of the trail.
- Use of fire, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and right-livelihood recovery of forests and watersheds are alive and well in Northern California—a hotspot being the region of Northern Mendocino and Southern Humboldt counties.

continued—with ample intense CAL FIRE public relations efforts. Some of these actions included proposing 80 acres of co-management, proposing some number of larger so-called PET* trees to be left on certain acres, some fire-oriented projects with limited consultation—but these actions did include the addition of three new JAG members, one from Save-the-Redwoods League, a coastal Pomo representative, and a local timber operator. More recently a Tribal Advisory Group has been started, but the basic precepts of co-management have not been determined, and a key report by the JAG Tribal Relations Subgroup in May 2022 remains in limbo.

** Three PET variations appeared: Potential Elite, Potential Elder, and Permanent Ecological.*

To bring this drama and crisis up to date: During 2023, starting around March, CAL FIRE bandied about documents for the "Scope of Work" to be done to establish a new management plan with co-management. This is intended to be handled by a contractor that CAL FIRE/BoF/CNRA will select. This seems to further isolate what needs to be done with input from the public and tribes and to absolve CAL FIRE/BoF/CNRA from the work that they should be doing. One could say that the future of Jackson State Forest, which is directly connected to the future and recovery of California forests, is at least as important as the future and recovery of anadromous salmon and steelhead. In large part, the actions to protect and recover those fish were guided by a select group of insightful and engaged scientists, not a contractor, that thoroughly consulted the whole range of stakeholders and examined conditions and needs. They produced a report that supported and resulted in key changes (Anadromous Salmonid Protection Rules) called Report of the Scientific Review

The Leggett Post Office after a lightening storm hit a trees that fell (left). PHOTO BY ALICIA BALES

To Get Involved

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Institute for Sustainable Forestry
instituteforsustainableforestry.com

Forests Forever
www.forestsforever.org

Mendocino Trails Stewards
mendocinotrailstewards.org

Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc.
www.rffi.org

Sanctuary Forest
sanctuaryforest.org

Save California Salmon
www.californiasalmon.org

Save Jackson Coalition
savejackson.org

Panel on California Forest Practice Rules and Salmonid Habitat.

One of my points is that the future of Jackson and its management/co-management needs to be determined by a much higher process, and perspective, than that offered by the standard command and control of CAL FIRE and the Board of Forestry. The vested interest of CAL FIRE and the Board of Forestry has been overwhelmingly resistant over time to changes that also happen to be opposed by industry, whether it be evaluation and response to cumulative impacts, true sustainability, adjustments for climate considerations, authority to require restoration, or cultural respect and protection.

This is probably the last opportunity to leverage essential long-resisted reforms regarding true sustainability, adequate protections, and recovery for forest, watershed, and cultural values. This includes specifics like true and effective evaluation and response to cumulative impacts, true consultation with Indians and Tribes, and true protection and respect for the Native American Heritage of California. These are three of the four parts of the EPIC & IITC decision by the California Appeals Court in 1985, which has fallen short of adequate implementation. Jackson is obviously a place where a model of these reforms, which include co-management, can and should occur, which can be applied as appropriate wherever possible in California.

Richard Gienger
On behalf of Forests Forever and as a Member of the Sierra Club Redwood Chapter of Northern CA Forest Committee

Please help out where and when you can on all the issues before us. Check out the work of Sanctuary Forest, the Institute for Sustainable Forestry, EPIC, Forests Forever, Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc., and Save California Salmon.

For additional important/essential information see *https://treesfoundation.org/?p=4561*

Since arriving in the Mattole Valley of Humboldt County in 1971, Richard Gienger has immersed himself in homesteading, forest activism, and watershed restoration. Richard's column covers a range of issues including fisheries, watershed restoration, and forestry, plus describes opportunities for the public to make positive contributions in the administrative and legislative arenas as well as in their own backyards.

Conservation Partner
Organizations at Work

Everyone Can Do Science! Nature Activities for Kids of All Ages

Friends of the Lost Coast

By Taylor Faye Benedict, Environmental Education Coordinator for Friends of the Lost Coast.

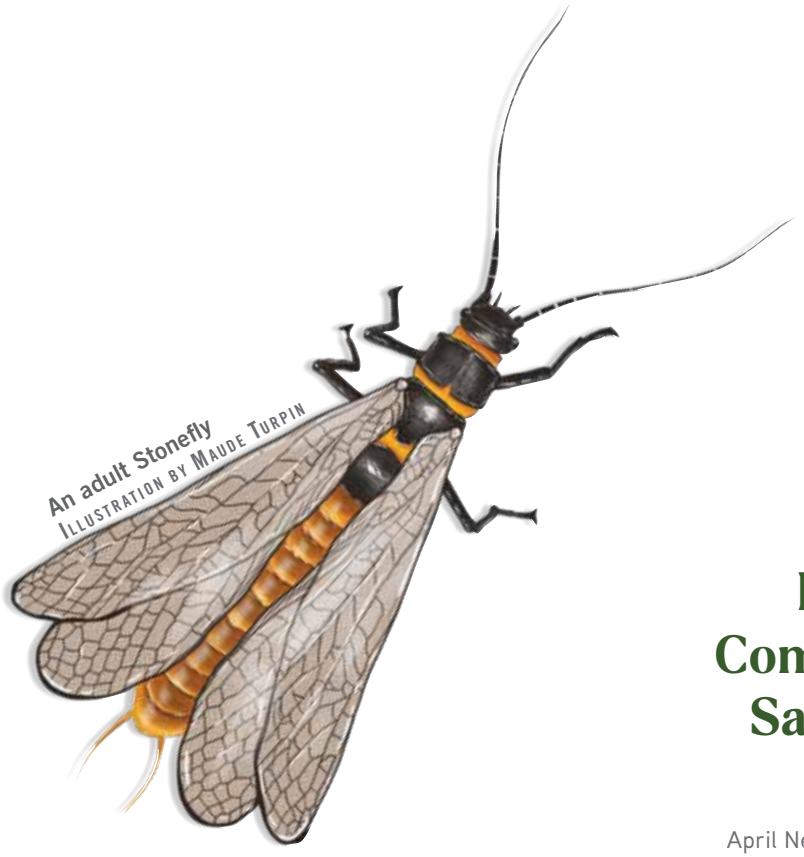
As an Environmental Educator, I've been able to bring environmental science to life for youth throughout the Lost Coast with the resounding message: Everyone can do science! I make sure that students know every day is an opportunity to "take chances, make mistakes, get messy," as my teaching role model, Miss Frizzle, would say.

Today, I'd like to introduce you to one of my favorite activities: "River Buddies." If you live near a river, you can try this at home!

If you were hired to assess the health of a river, how would you do it? Maybe you would use your senses to look for an algae overgrowth, count the number of different fish you find, or even take water samples to look at in a lab. In "River Buddies," kids (and adults!) investigate their local waterways and learn the basics of water-quality monitoring. Did you know water bugs with no backbones (called macroinvertebrates) can give us clues about water quality or pollution? Some of them are very sensitive to pollution and cannot live in rivers or streams with low water quality. They need cold, deep, oxygen-rich, freely flowing water, whereas other critters like mosquito larvae, aquatic worms, or leeches can tolerate shallow, warm, oxygen-depleted water.

Because these living things are indicating (or telling us about) water quality, we can say these macroinvertebrates are bioindicators.

Dobsonfly and Stonefly Larva
Taylor Faye Benedict



An adult Stonefly
Illustration by Maude Turpin

[Bioindicators are living organisms such as plants, planktons, animals, and microbes, which are utilized to screen the health of the natural ecosystem in the environment. They are used for assessing environmental health and biogeographic changes taking place in the environment.]

Take a trip to your local river in spring or fall and see what critters you can find! What are they telling you about your water quality? You can use an aquarium net and small collection containers to scoop up your macroinvertebrate friends and observe them. Be sure to keep them in water so they can breathe, treat them gently, and put them back where you found them once you've had a chance to check them out. If you find stonefly, caddisfly, mayfly, or other larvae that have a low tolerance to pollution, that's a good sign that the river is happy and healthy! Many of these aquatic larvae will go through metamorphosis, just like a caterpillar, and grow up to be something with wings. Keep checking in at your river spot to see how the species change through the seasons.

For more information*: lostcoast.org*

Embrace Nature and Community: Volunteer with Sanctuary Forest Today!

Sanctuary Forest Inc.

April Newlander, Executive Director, Sanctuary Forest Inc.

In the heart of our rural community lies a sanctuary of natural beauty and a home for many forms of life. The headwaters of the Mattole River offer a place of tranquility, inviting us to pause, reflect, and connect with the world around us. At Sanctuary Forest, stewardship and education intertwine, cultivating a deep-rooted connection between people and the natural world. Our Stewardship and Education Programs emphasize not just preserving the environment but also fostering a sense of responsibility, understanding, and appreciation for our surroundings. Through hands-on projects, immersive learning experiences, and community engagement, we strive to empower individuals to become active participants in the preservation and restoration of our precious ecosystems.

Central to the success of these endeavors are our volunteers. Engaging with Sanctuary Forest offers enriching experiences such as streamflow and groundwater monitoring, where you'll have the chance to explore

A Sanctuary Forest Stewardship Hike PHOTO COURTESY SFI

hidden corners of the forest while collecting valuable data that will inform our community about the state of the river. Other volunteer opportunities include participation in habitat surveys, instream infrastructure repairs, invasive species removal, and native plantings. If you are a hiking enthusiast, you might want to consider becoming one of our hike docents as part of Sanctuary Forest's summer hike program. Sanctuary Forest's Education Program, featuring guided hikes and workshops, provides invaluable opportunities for residents and visitors to explore and learn about this unique landscape. Becoming a hike docent offers an ideal chance to share your knowledge and experiences and to learn from others who share a passion for understanding and caring for the natural world.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of volunteering with Sanctuary Forest is the sense of community and camaraderie it fosters. Working side by side with a neighbor or meeting new people, volunteers forge enduring memories and relationships. Whether you're an experienced naturalist or a curious novice, there's a place for you on Sanctuary Forest's volunteer team. Together, we can make a difference for all who call the Mattole River watershed home, now and for future generations.

If you are interested in becoming a hike docent, Sanctuary Forest is hosting a one-day training workshop on April 7 at the Sanctuary Forest office, located at 315 Shelter Cove Rd, #4, in Whitethorn. During this training, volunteers will gain insights into the history of the Sanctuary Forest Hike Program and the responsibilities of being a docent. For further details, please contact Anna Rogers, Education Director, at 707-986-1087 ext.9#, or via email at anna@sanctuaryforest.org.

Bonus! If you are a high school student in need of community service hours, you can fulfill your hours by volunteering with Sanctuary Forest. Contact us for more information.

For more information: *sanctuaryforest.org*

GET INVOLVED WITH SANCTUARY FOREST!

- *Native Plantings*
- *Habitat Surveys*
- *Water Monitoring*
- *Invasive Species Removal*
- *Hike Docenting*

Salmonid Conference 2024

Holding Space—Restoring Habitat and Making Room for Innovation

Salmonid Restoration Federation

Salmonid Restoration Federation (SRF) produces the largest salmon restoration conference in California, convening a diverse range of people in the watershed restoration field including planners, engineers, policymakers, students, Watershed Stewards Program members, consultants, academics, tribal members, on-the-ground practitioners, and landowners. It is this wide range of practitioners and the intersection of science and application that animate our conference and create a dynamic venue for learning from one another's experience and expertise.

In March SRF hosted the 41st Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference in Santa Rosa, CA. Due to selling out early last year, we hosted the conference at the Sonoma Fairgrounds for the workshops and tours, and at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Santa Rosa for the main conference days. This state-of-the-art facility had room for all our multifaceted events including the Plenary session, a mentor-mentee program, a lively poster session, exhibitor space, and a banquet dinner and awards ceremony.

This year's Plenary included keynote addresses from Mark Bransom (CEO of the Klamath River Renewal Corporation) and Frankie Myers (Yurok Tribe Vice-Chair) about the environmental and cultural significance of the Klamath dam removal— the largest dam removal in history. Other keynote speakers were Armando Quintero, Director of California State Parks, presenting on how language shapes our view and ability to achieve environmental justice; Jen Quan (West Coast Regional Administrator of NOAA Fisheries) and Kristen Koch (Director, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Fisheries), who gave a talk called Making the Most of Opportunities for Salmon Recovery in a Warming World; and Ann Willis, PhD, of American Rivers presenting on Healthy Rivers, Healthy Communities: How River Conservation Heals Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Environmental Justice.

Jen Quan, NOAA Fisheries West Coast Regional Administrator and Frankie Myers, Yurok Tribe Vice-Chair, both spoke at the SRF Conference Plenary Session.

As with former conferences, participants this year had the opportunity to explore innovative restoration projects and take part in technical workshops. Practical workshops on forward-thinking restoration topics included:

- Community Outreach, Collaboration Tools, and Tribal Engagement
- Nature-like Fishways: Modern Perspectives and Techniques
- The Role of Conservation Hatcheries in Salmon Recovery
- Fish and Fire Conversation: Where Do We Go from Here?

Field tours included restoration projects in Lagunitas Creek, Napa River Restoration, the Garcia River Estuary Habitat Enhancement, Dry Creek, Process-Based Restoration in the Uplands of Western Sonoma, Urban Creek Restoration, and the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

There were concurrent sessions highlighting groundwater recharge planning, effectiveness monitoring, streamlined permitting pathways, Klamath post-dam removal restoration actions, fish passage, low-tech Process-Based Restoration, and so much more.

Our scholarship fund ensures that the conference is accessible to students, tribal members, and landowners who otherwise may not be able to attend. SRF matches each dollar contributed. Here is the link to our scholarship fund. *https://calsalmon.nationbuilder.com/srf_conf_scholarship_fund*

To learn more about the conference, please visit *www.calsalmon.org/conferences/41st-annual-salmonid-restoration-conference.*

For more information: *calsalmon.org*

The Smith River

26th Annual Coho Confab

September 13-15, 2024, Smith River

By Salmonid Restoration Federation

SRF, with the support of California Department of Fish and Wildlife, will host the 26th Annual Coho Confab at the beautiful Rock Creek Ranch on the South Fork of the Smith River. The pristine Smith River is the largest undammed river in California and is located in the northwest corner of the state in the Siskiyou Mountains. The Confab will feature tours of planned and completed fish passage projects, and restoration projects in the lower Klamath and Smith River estuary.

For more information: *calsalmon.org*

More Upcoming Events

Forest & River News

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The confluence of Dillon Creek and Klamath River
Photo by Jason Hartwick / Swiftwater Films

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by Randy LaMorte

The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of Trees Foundation.

If you would like to distribute *Forest & River News* in your area, please contact us!

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Our mission is to restore the ecological integrity of California's North Coast by empowering and assisting community-based, regional projects that promote healthy land stewardship.

While for many of us "Every day is Earth Day," Trees Foundation is highlighting the annual renewal of our commitment to the Earth with this issue of *Forest and River News.* We hope the community joins us this Earth Day on April 22nd—the "how" is up to you! We suggest simply getting outside, taking a hike and packing out any trash you find, planting a tree or pollinator-friendly flowers, or doing some brush clearing with your neighbors. And, if you're able, support an organization that shares your dedication to the environment!

We hope you'll consider making a gift to Trees Foundation this Earth Day. Doing so enables us to support critically important local groups in their efforts to conserve and restore our forests and streams, and make our area wildfire-safe.

Trees Foundation provides the financial and administrative support many of these smaller organizations need to thrive. However you celebrate Earth Day this year, thank you for the care and thoughtful stewardship you give our planet every day.

In this earth,
In this soil,
In this pure field
Let's not plant any seed
Other than seeds of compassion and love

Rumi