



# Central Coast Forest Association

## CCFA HOLDS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

By Pat Driscoll

Approximately forty people attended the annual membership meeting at the Friendship Garden picnic site at Harvey West Park in Santa Cruz. There were good camaraderie, delicious trip BBQ provided by CCFA, and numerous side dishes offered by attendees. This year, potato salad dominated, but desserts and snacks were also featured. Board members and their families pitched in early, had the tables covered and a fire built, and were on hand to welcome the members and guests.

The guest speaker, Rich Sampson, head of Cal Fire in the Santa Cruz district, gave an interesting and informative talk about how we forest landowners could prepare for wildfire safety while we were harvesting and attending our forests, and how we could better help our neighbors prepare. The subject matter was pertinent, considering the number of wildfires in the area during 2008-2009. The audience was attentive and several commented later they had enjoyed his presentation. He also brought a fire truck to show how wide and tall they are so we could prepare our roads and gateways to accommodate them during a fire. Three fire crew members attended with him.

Pat Driscoll had chosen and organized the site and had prepared the beans, while Ron DiBenedetti and Brian Campbell did the honors as BBQ chefs.

After selling CCFA T-shirts as a fundraiser for two years, the final few were given away to members as they arrived.

President Jim Hildreth welcomed all the members and guests, but rather than give a long talk, he had prepared a list of accomplishments of CCFA over the past year, and they were available for the members, along with information pamphlets.

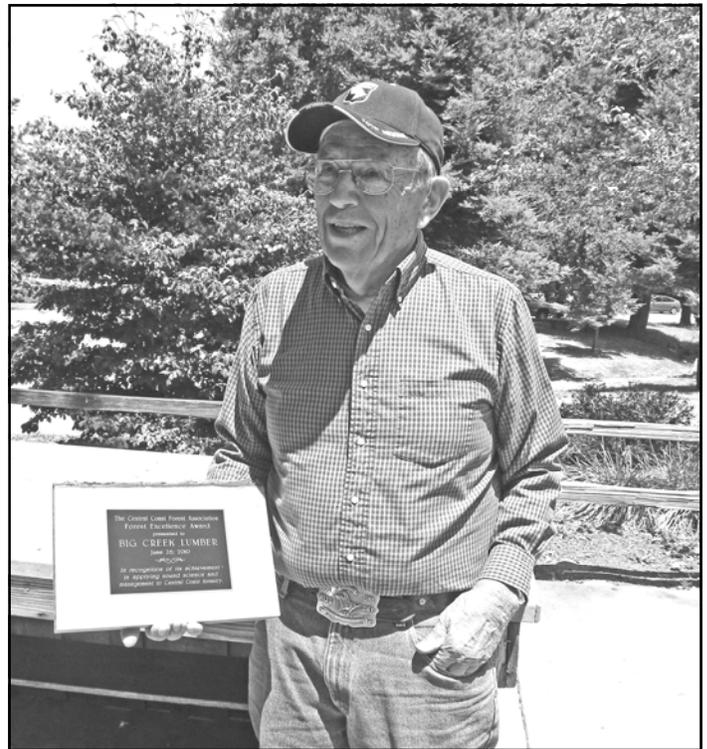


L to R: Brian Campbell and Ron DiBenedetti prepared the meat, while foresters Gary Paul and Jim Hildreth enjoyed socializing. Look inside for more photos. All photos by Barbara McCrary.

The CCFA Forestry Excellence Award was presented to Big Creek Lumber this year for its 64 years of outstanding harvesting practices in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Lud McCrary, one of the founders, received the award. Barbara McCrary had prepared an informative and amusing short history of the company from its inception. The actual award was created by Brian Campbell, featuring a brass plate mounted on a beautifully finished piece of Bay Laurel wood.

Ballots of votes for continuing Board members were collected and all nominees were re-elected for their terms: Barbara McCrary, rancher and forestland owner from Swanton - 3 years; Gary Paul, professional forester from Aptos - 3 years; and Brian Campbell, forestland owner from Santa Cruz - 3 years.

The meeting was over and the area cleaned by 2:00 PM. ■



Lud McCrary, co-founder of the 64-year-old Big Creek Lumber Co. in Swanton, accepts the CCFA Forestry Excellence award for 2010.

### NOTICE

Two items were left at the picnic site: A very nice folding cloth chair in dark green and tan stripes, and a light green plastic Jello or dessert mold. We will hold these for the rightful owners until you contact us. Call Barbara at 831-423-4572 to claim.



**Rich Sampson, Division Chief and Forester II of CDF gave the keynote talk on defending the property of timberland owners against wildfires.**



**Jim and Joanne Hildreth listen intently to Rich Sampson's informative presentation.**

## ESTATE TAXES - A HOT TOPIC IN CONGRESS

By Cate Moore

In 2001, Congress passed a tax reform package that featured a phase-out of the Estate Tax over a ten-year period, ending with a full repeal for one year in 2010, before it returns in 2011 to its original configuration of 55% of estates valued at more than \$1 million.

In California, land values make it very easy for even a modest family ranch to be assessed at one million dollars. Most of this assessed value is not in liquid assets; it is in the land and, especially for family forest landowners, in the timber inventory on that land. This frequently forces the inheritors of these ranches to liquidate the farm to pay these taxes, destroying the jobs these ranches supported along with the ranches themselves.

The farming and forest communities, along with small business owners who have similar inheritance issues, have been advocating that something be done about Estate Tax reform before the 2011 deadline.

To date, the following bills have been floated:

### HR 3524 - the Family Farm Preservation and Conservation Estate Tax Act

This bill exempts working woodlands from the estate tax if the land is passed on to heirs and correct flaws in current estate tax law that limits woodland owner participation in special estate tax exemptions for working lands.

### HR 4154 - The Permanent Estate Tax Relief for Families, Farmers, and Small Businesses Act of 2009

This bill applies the 2009 estate tax rate (45%) and exemptions (\$3.5 million for individuals) permanently. It has passed the House of Representatives.

### HR 5475 - the Family Farm Estate Tax Relief Act of 2010

This bill removes the estate tax burden on family-owned forests, if the land stays in the family and is managed sustainably.

Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Jon Kyl (R-AZ) have proposed an initiative to offer relief from the impending 2011 Death Tax reinstatement via an interim measure of a 35% tax rate on estates worth more than \$5 million. They tried to attach it to the Senate's Small Business Jobs Act, but it was not voted on in the Senate Finance Committee.

### S 3664 - the Family Estate Tax Deferral Act of 2010

Last week, Senators Diane Feinstein (D-CA) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) introduced this bill which will help preserve forest land by helping families avoid the pressure of selling to pay taxes when land is passed down from one generation to the next. This bill is similar to HR 5475.

We urge our members to weigh in on this subject by contacting their representatives and their senators, explaining how important estate tax reform is to forest landowners. Remind them that:

- The assets of a farm are not liquid, and breaking out a portion of the assets to pay the estate bill can force the heirs to subdivide the farm or conduct a premature harvest in order to cover the bill.
- The liquidation of a farm or ranch will put the people who work on that ranch out of their jobs, the last thing anyone wants to see in this economy.
- Central California has forestry rules that do not permit harvesting any more frequently than every 10 years on any plot of land. Harvesting this land prematurely to cover estate taxes could put the heirs in a legal bind, where they may have to pay punitive fees as well as the estate taxes.

The Farm Bureau, the American Forest Foundation, and the Forest Landowners Association have all been heavily involved in tracking this issue and are good sources of information about the current state of affairs.

Further information about these estate tax bills can be found at:

<http://www.familyforestation.org/forestfoundation/issues/alert/?alertid=15579621>

<http://forestblog.org/wordpress/?p=695>

<http://www.capwiz.com/forestfoundation/issues/bills/?bill=14410276>

<http://www.capwiz.com/forestfoundation/issues/bills/?bill=14010136> ■

## CCFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING UPDATE:

On August 4, 2010, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) held a public hearing in Sacramento to review several “controversial” 303(d) federal listings of impaired watersheds. Included in this hearing was a consideration of San Vicente Creek, located on the North Coast of Santa Cruz County. The history of the “listing” of San Vicente Creek is both fascinating and disturbing.

In 2004, staff at the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board made a recommendation that San Vicente Creek be listed as impaired for turbidity. The original listing recommendation designated the source (cause) of this sediment as “unknown”. The process of listing watercourses (in California) starts with the various regional boards. Information and data are gathered, analyzed and the proposed listings are sent to the SWRCB for review. This process occurs every two years. The state board eventually sends this list to the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for final approval.

On October 25, 2006, the proposed listing of San Vicente Creek was taken under consideration by the state board at a public hearing. When it came up for discussion, two individuals from Santa Cruz County spoke. They provided unsubstantiated verbal testimony. Neither of these speakers had any scientific credentials. Nor did they provide the state board with any specific data relevant to San Vicente Creek.

Nevertheless, based on this verbal testimony, and a couple of months of turbidity data submitted by a third individual, the state board changed the listed impairment from turbidity to “sediment/siltation” and the source was changed from unknown to “silviculture” (logging).

Subsequent to the October 2006 state board hearing, a local Registered Professional Forester (RPF) researched the original turbidity data that had been submitted prior to that hearing. It was discovered that this data comprised only three winter months of a much larger data set. 91 data points had been submitted from a data set that contained more than 1,400 data points. In other words, the few winter months that showed the highest turbidity readings had been cherry-picked and submitted to the state board.

The larger San Vicente Creek turbidity data set was submitted by the RPF as part of the next 2-year review cycle. At a regional board public hearing in 2009, staff stated that this more complete data set indicated that San Vicente Creek “did not even come close to meeting the board’s criteria for listing.” Unfortunately, the larger data set was not submitted in time for it to be considered by the regional board. However, the state board took it up in early 2010, with a staff recommendation to de-list the creek based on the more complete data.

The state board held a hearing in June 2010 and chose to hold over any watercourse listing where there was public concern or disagreement until their August 4, 2010 hearing. Disturbingly, just prior to the August hearing, state board staff posted a “Staff Change” notice on the agency’s website, and reversed their recommendation for San Vicente Creek from “de-list” to “do not de-list”. The stated reason for staff’s new recommendation was that “additional information was needed”, there was no quality assurance/quality control conducted on the expanded data set and “conflicting” information had been had been submitted by

various members of the public.

At the August 4 public hearing, five individuals spoke in favor of de-listing San Vicente Creek. One resident from Santa Cruz County spoke in favor of retaining the listing. This was the same individual who had submitted the original 3 months of cherry-picked winter data. Incredibly, this individual stated that the greatly expanded data set was missing several months, and was therefore flawed – the proverbial pot calling the tea kettle black.

In the end, the State Water Resources Control Board voted unanimously to retain the sedimentation/siltation impairment listing for San Vicente Creek, but to remove silviculture as the designated source.

The entire issue will now be considered during the next two years, with a new recommendation and decision scheduled for 2012. CCFA will keep you informed as this process develops.

■

## OPINION

### Where Have All the Mastodons Gone?

When President Richard M. Nixon signed into law the Endangered Species Act, he surely did not envision how it would be misused and abused by the environmental extremists of today who apparently believe that the preservation of all creatures, great and small, takes precedence over the well-being of American citizens.

The currently politically correct position embraced by the Environmental Protection Agency is that any species, if it has been declared by that group to be endangered, must be preserved at all cost, notwithstanding how this preservation affects humans and their activities. They rationalize this position by insisting that the loss of any species would irreparably disrupt the natural ecological balance on which we all depend.

But the ecological balance is in a constant state of change. Since the earth began as a part of the universe, the creatures inhabiting it have come and gone, like streetcars in a city. The dinosaurs have all come and gone, Saber-tooth tigers, mastodons, and a host of other animals and plants have become extinct. Only recently, the American Bison just barely survived, but the Passenger Pigeon, alas, didn't make it. But the good news is, human beings have persisted and thrived. Some university professors tell us that the Delta smelt may soon go the way of the Passenger Pigeon. So, they say, may the Red-legged Frog. But I don't believe that their passing will mark the end of the world as we know it. I have lived in California since 1931, and I have yet not seen either hide or hair of either, and for this I do not feel deprived.

The people who rightfully do feel deprived are the farmers and foresters who are forced to pay the intolerably heavy costs of trying to keep these species alive. This is crazy. It is un-American. Hard-working citizens trying to support their families by providing food and fiber for other people all over the world are being forced to constrain their otherwise useful, legal, and necessary activities in order to satisfy a group of enviro-maniacs who believe that we can and should return our environment to what it was when there were only ten million people living in California. Some "environmentalists" do, indeed, live in an fantasy world. They are out of touch with the thirty-five million

## THE LOCKHEED FIRE - ONE YEAR LATER

By Barbara McCrary

The time since the Lockheed Fire has passed so quickly it seems impossible that it is already one year later.

We spent some time assessing the damage - what to repair, what could be repaired, and how we should proceed.

As soon as the ground was cold, the forestry crew planted 8,000 redwood seedlings, approximately 12" high, in the ashes along watercourses and under cover of the remaining live trees and burned snags. One year later, most are thriving, putting out fresh growth and fighting their way through the re-growth of wild blackberry vines, thistles, and bindweed.

Cal Fire had provided us with 18 sacks, 50 pounds each, of ryegrass seed and we broadcast it in the ashes, under the snags of the burned-out pine and fir trees on the steep hillsides. We broadcast some of our own dryland pasture seed in other areas.

Fall, winter, and spring rains were kind to the devastated area, with rain commencing in mid-September, somewhat earlier than usual, and continuing through late May. The most rain in a 24-hour period was in mid-October - 4", but the remaining rainfall was gentle and frequent, and resulted in a total for the season of 42.26 inches. This is about 10" above normal average for a year here on our ranch. Our scattered seed sprouted and grew grass over four feet high. We were ecstatic, although we had one dreadful nuisance - the most prolific growth of thistles and wild hemlock we've ever seen. Thistles grew to 5 and 6 feet tall. We spent weekend after weekend on thistle control.

But, as soon as the ashes were cold, our first necessity was to replace burned-out fences so we could contain our cattle. Previously, we had been able to rely on thick brush in many places to keep them in. The brush was now gone along with most of the fences, and there was nothing to keep curious cattle from wandering onto neighboring properties and into the canyons.

We started building fences during the late fall, and we discovered that wet ash is very slippery. On one particularly steep hillside, we devised a safety system to help us work. We took several hundred feet of rope, tied it to a tree at the top of the hill, and slid down the hill to the next sturdy tree where we tied off the rope. Continuing downhill, we repeated the procedure until we ran out of rope and had reached a flat next to a steep drop-off into a gulch. After a few of days of work, we finished this fence, hauled tools back up to the top of the hill, hand over hand on the rope, which we untied as we went. We wished someone had been able to take a video of this operation, as it was probably the most challenging terrain and conditions where we have ever built fence. Occasional fence projects continued into this summer, as the cows discovered other routes for exploration.

Back in early winter, with the first rains soaking in, Nature began to repair the damage. Redwoods sprouted quickly from the burned roots, as did oak, madrone, and manzanita. Knobcone pines, a fire-regenerated species, had flung seeds from heated cones far and wide in the fall, and began to sprout heavily. They are now several inches high and are carpeting the mountainsides, as are the Bush Poppies, with grey-green foliage and their cheerful, intensely yellow blossoms. Before the fire, I might see a few bushes here and there, but now they are profuse.

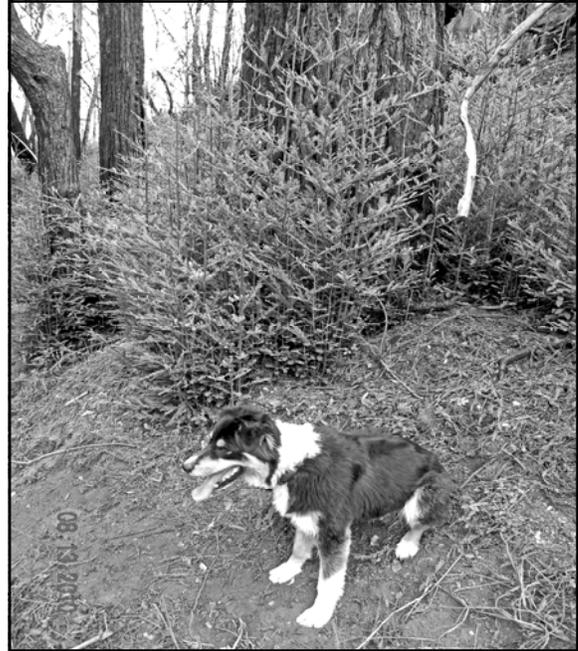
We were able to get permits to do salvage logging and had only select burned redwoods removed. Salvage from the steep mountainsides was done by helicopter, and post-logging operations included lopping, where the numerous redwood limbs

were cut into short pieces so they could lie close to the ground for quicker decomposition. Ranch roads were upgraded and gateways widened to accommodate fire trucks in the future.

Probably a combination of good winter rainfall and decrease of vegetation competing for the water supply has allowed springs to run well into the fall, and the creeks to run fresh.

From the historical standpoint, we lost the last remnants of the old Big Creek Power Co. hydro-electric system built in 1897 and run until 1948. They had survived the 1948 fire, but could not survive this one, which burned hotter and deeper into the canyons than in 1948.

Time is gradually healing the injured land...



Regrowth of redwoods from burned trees, one year later. They are between 3 and 4 feet high.

## BOARD MEMBER RON DIBENEDETTI REPORTS...

We have just started logging on our 80 acres in Corralitos with Gary Paul as forester. Big Creek is buying the logs. Everything is going fine. The fallers have worked on our property before and are great to work with so far. I think they will do a very fine job. We have personally logged two times before and have learned a lot. Every time we log, the forest has expanded in volume. We used to be able to see the coast line but not any more. We have our NTMP It took a year, but the process from start to were we are today took about 3 years. ■

### Opinion (Continued from page 3)

Californians facing the every day problems of life in this modern world.

The mastodon has come and gone, a victim of ever-changing world of life on our planet Earth. On the other hand, Man has endured because of his intelligence and adaptability, and his keen desire to persevere. Unfortunately, the Delta smelt, the Red-Legged Frog, and even the Coho salmon, may not make it, but if they don't, Man will surely adapt to life on Earth without them.

Doug White, Scotts Valley

Central Coast Forest Association  
Membership / Renewal / Contribution

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for:  New Membership  Membership Renewal  Legal Fund  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:

Central Coast Forest Association P.O. Box 1670 Capitola, CA 95010

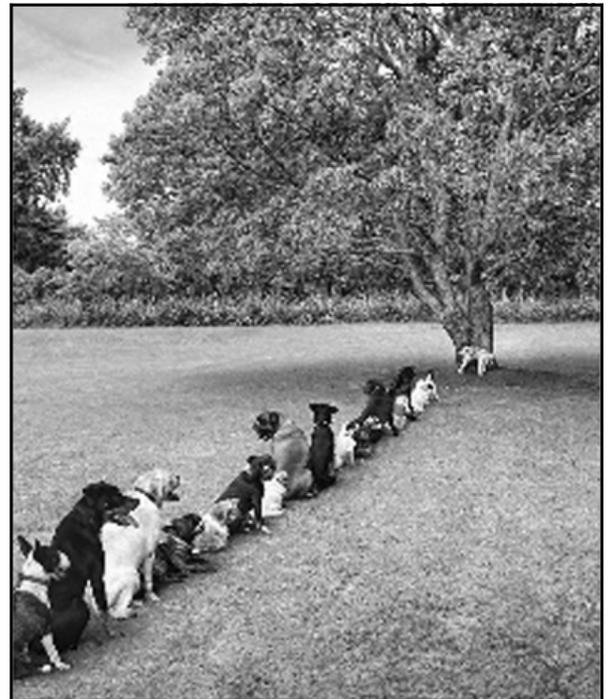
Membership Category	Dues
Individual	\$50
Business	\$500

CCFA appreciates your support

CCFA is a 501-(c) 4 tax-exempt organization. Donations may be tax-deductible as a business expense.



# Notes From the Nut-House



Another problem caused by deforestation

PC AND PIXEL | Tak Bui



We're on the web!  
www.ccfassociation.org

Central Coast Forest Association  
P.O. Box 1670  
Capitola, CA 95010



**IMPORTANT NOTICE: HELP US COMMUNICATE!**

Occasionally we need to rally the membership to respond to abrupt government actions. We must be able to contact you in a hurry in such circumstances. Please submit your current e-mail address to us via our website, [www.ccfassociation.org](http://www.ccfassociation.org) or by e-mail to: [ccfa@ccfassociation.org](mailto:ccfa@ccfassociation.org). We will keep it strictly confidential at all times.

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

The forests must be, and will be, not only preserved but used, and the experience of all civilized countries that have faced and solved the question show that the forests, like perennial fountains, may be made to yield a sure harvest of timber while at the same time all their far-reaching beneficent uses may be maintained unimpaired.

*John Muir*  
Founder of the Sierra Club in 1895

**CCFA's Mission**

*The Central Coast Forest Association is a non-profit alliance of small forestland owners, forestry professionals and forest-oriented businesses with close affinity to the woods, mountains, streams and wildlife of the Central Coast. Our purpose is to uphold and preserve our values, our property rights and our way of life. To advance this objective, CCFA will:*

- *Interact with community, political and environmental interests as a voice for forestland owners.*
- *Understand the news, law and technology of forestry and apply this knowledge for the benefit and protection of forestland owners.*
- *Inform members of matters affecting their lands and forests.*
- *Take political and legal action to defend the rights and property of all Central Coast forestland owners.*

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