



Background

Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC) was created in July 2008 through the reorganization of the former Pacific Lumber Company and related entities. HRC consists of approximately 327 square miles (209,300 acres) of coast redwood and Douglas-fir forestland spanning across over 60 Northern California coastal watersheds with about 305 miles of fish-bearing streams and nearly 1,100 miles of streams supporting non-fish aquatic life. The forestlands are located about five hours north of the Golden Gate Bridge in Humboldt County.

These lands have been harvested dating back to the early 1850's by a variety of owners. Early historical harvesting was conducted in a shortsighted manner, with a heavy reliance on clearcutting and burning. Starting in the mid 1930's, the previous owner implemented a management style of selective logging which continued until the mid 1980's at which time clearcutting was reinstated following a change in ownership. Consequently, the conifer balance on the majority of the land is relatively unchanged, and only in the most southern tracts has the tanoak component grown out of balance after removal of the Douglas-fir.

From the beginning, HRC has operated with a publicly declared purpose to duplicate what has worked for Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC), HRC's sister business. It is based on the idea that it is possible to manage a large block of productive forestland utilizing high standards of environmental stewardship and at the same time to operate as a successful business. HRC's intent is to maintain forestlands for long-term ecological, social, and economic vitality. Stewardship objectives are achieved by maintaining and where possible improving habitat for aquatic and land-based species, protecting old growth forests and water resources, enhancing forest complexity and biodiversity, and supporting the well being of local communities. HRC seeks to be a successful steward of the forest, and to create a positive, economically viable example of how private forest management can protect and restore the ecological attributes of an industrial landscape. HRC has a policy of open and transparent operations, and is willing to take interested members of the public anywhere in its forest.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification

In 2009, HRC was evaluated by and received certificates from two of FSC's accredited certifiers located in the U.S.: Scientific Certification Systems (SCS-FM/COC-000120N) of Emeryville, California, and the Richmond, Vermont-based SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance (SW-FM/COC-004551). The Forest Stewardship Council is an international, independent, non-profit organization that promotes responsible forestry, and is supported by many of the leading environmental organizations in the country

(see www.fscus.org). FSC Certification is awarded when an independent evaluation of a forest company's practices meets the highest standards for environmentally and socially responsible forestry. The certification reports are available on this web site at www.hrcllc.com/Reports-CertificationReports.aspx.

HRC's Actions On Key Issues Since Start-Up

HARVEST RATES AND LONG-TERM HARVEST PLANNING:

From 1995 through 2007, an average of 187 million board feet (MMBF) of timber was harvested annually on the lands now owned by HRC. This harvest ranged from a low of 82.5 MMBF (in 2007) to a high of 295.3 MMBF (1996). HRC has committed to harvesting an average of approximately 55 MMBF per year for the first decade of ownership. Annual growth on HRC lands is estimated at 100-110 MMBF, thus HRC's standing inventory of trees will increase significantly over the next ten years. HRC is currently in the process of reviewing and validating the inventory of trees and other forest resources on its lands, and will use this information as the foundation of a new long-term harvest plan that will be shared with the public before it is adopted.

TRADITIONAL CLEARCUTTING ELIMINATED:

HRC's management model was formed to emulate what has worked for MRC. Accordingly, before any timber harvesting commenced, company foresters evaluated all approved Timber Harvesting Plans (THPs) and converted nearly all of the planned clearcuts to partial harvest methods. On well-stocked conifer stands, which comprise most of HRC's forests, HRC uses "uneven-aged" management, typically retaining 50% of the pre-harvest stocking. In the few areas where restoration forestry is needed (due to hardwood competition), HRC will use a special harvest prescription called "Variable Retention" to return degraded stands back to redwood and Douglas-fir forests. Variable retention harvesting retains between 10% and 50% of the original stand in pockets or groups of trees and dispersed trees across the stand. This silviculture method will be followed by replanting with conifers to restore the forest type.

OLD GROWTH PROTECTION:

HRC has an old growth protection policy which preserves "un-entered" old growth stands and also retains all individual trees meeting HRC's old growth definition (see Key Policies – Old Growth section on this website for additional information). The identification and delineation of the un-entered old growth stands is an on-going process. We estimate that there are 10-20 such stands covering some 100-300 acres across the property.

HERBICIDE USE REDUCTION:

Our annual herbicide use varies depending on the level of harvest and the stands chosen for restoration. Over the long term, herbicide usage will decrease proportionally as HRC converts its landscape from even-aged stand management (clearcutting) to partial harvest (selection). The shade from the conifer overstory in an uneven-aged stand typically inhibits the excess growth of hardwoods, brush, and weeds, and use of herbicides will diminish over time. However, there will be instances where regenerating a conifer stand or to address invasive species may require careful consideration of site-specific herbicide use. Moreover, in keeping with Forest Stewardship Council principles, HRC is committed to phasing out the use of chemical herbicides as a routine management tool and transitioning to silvicultural regimes which require little or no herbicides to ensure conifer survival and growth. HRC foresters closely evaluate each forest stand before and after harvesting to determine if and where herbicides are required.

Key Components Of Our Habitat Conservation Plan

PROTECTION OF SPECIES:

HRC inherited the 1999 Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the property. Under the protections provided by the HCP, marbled murrelets continue to nest in the Marbled Murrelet Conservation Areas (MMCA's), a system of reserves made up of the largest redwood old growth forest stands on HRC lands. Similarly, the large riparian buffers required by the HCP are designed to provide tree canopy over streams for maintenance of cool water temperatures, filter strip properties, and abundant large wood for protection and enhancement of salmonid habitat. Spotted owls, Pacific fisher, and other species benefit from these protected areas, as well as the habitat structures (snags and other tree forms favored by wildlife) retained during harvest. In addition, the HCP provides specific protections for the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, western snowy plover, bank swallow, red tree vole, amphibians and reptiles, and rare plants.

WATERSHED ANALYSIS:

Watershed Analysis, a cornerstone component of the Habitat Conservation Plan, is a process that characterizes watershed conditions affecting aquatic habitat through multi-disciplinary scientific analyses, and from these analyses projects future trends in watershed conditions. The result generates forestry and monitoring recommendations and an opportunity for HCP updates through adaptive management. Collaborative partners include the California Department of Fish and Game, NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Geologic Survey, local consultants and community groups. Public involvement in the form of issue identification at the start, and presentation of key findings and a public review draft near the end, is a part of the process.

CONSERVATION AREAS:

HRC has 6,640 acres conservation areas containing both old growth redwood stands and mature second growth redwood stands with significant residual old growth trees. Comprising six separate areas, these stands have been shown to be active nesting habitat for the endangered marbled murrelet. Conserving these stands also provides protection for other species that depend on mature forests, enhances stream quality, maintains biodiversity, and, along with riparian buffers, contributes to a network of habitat corridors in the region.

ROADS MANAGEMENT:

Roads can be a significant source of sediment that is delivered to watercourses, but this impact can be substantially reduced through proper management and upgrades. HRC intends to minimize the impacts of forest roads through an ambitious plan of road improvements. This includes ongoing road inventory and assessment, road upgrading and stormproofing, and cooperative restoration projects with state and federal agencies to improve water quality.