



(Updated August 2009)

Background

Mendocino Redwood Company was created in July 1998. MRC consists of approximately 350 square miles (228,800 acres) of forestland spanning across over 75 Northern California coastal watersheds with 1500 miles of year-round streams. The forestlands are located about two hours north of the Golden Gate Bridge in Mendocino and Sonoma counties.

These lands have been heavily harvested dating back to the early 1850's by a variety of owners. Historical harvesting was conducted in a shortsighted manner, with a heavy reliance on clearcutting and burning. As a result, the redwood and Douglas-fir trees on the land were substantially reduced and the tanoak component grew out of balance. When MRC was created, tanoak had crowded out or inhibited the regeneration of redwood and Douglas-fir trees on nearly 50% of the property. The abundance and diversity of forestland and aquatic species had also been reduced, especially the currently fragile populations of coho salmon, and marbled murrelets.

From the beginning, MRC's stated purpose has been to demonstrate it is possible to manage productive forestlands with a high standard of environmental stewardship, and also operate a successful business. The company's original stewardship objective has evolved into a goal of restoring its property to a redwood and Douglas-fir dominated selectively-harvested forest. Additional stewardship objectives include measurable improvements in aquatic and upslope habitat, old growth protection, clean water, and community well being in addition to producing long-term sustainable timber supplies. MRC seeks to be an example of forest restoration that

creates a positive, economically successful example of how private forest management can protect and restore the ecological attributes of an industrial landscape. MRC 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 2000, MRC was evaluated by and received certificates from two of FSC's accredited certifiers located in the U.S.: Scientific Certification Systems of Oakland, California, and the Richmond, Vermont-based SmartWood Program of the Rainforest Alliance. The Forest Stewardship Council is an international, independent, non-profit organization that promotes responsible forestry. 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 FSC has the backing of the world's leading environmental groups, including the World Wildlife Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Wilderness Society and Greenpeace. In 2005, MRC was re-certified as a well-managed forest by Scientific Certification Systems and the Smartwood Program of Rainforest Alliance (all certificates are evaluated annually with a comprehensive re-evaluation every 5 years).

MRC's Actions On Key Issues Since Start-Up

HARVEST RATES, INVENTORY, AND FOREST RESTORATION:

MRC lowered our harvest level from the previous owner and has since increased our starting conifer inventory from 2.1 billion board feet in 1998 to 2.8 billion board feet in 2008. Since 1998, MRC staff has planted over 7,000,000 Douglas-fir and redwood seedlings in an effort to restore and maintain our conifer forest.

TRADITIONAL CLEARCUTTING ELIMINATED:

MRC made the decision in the fall of 1998 to eliminate traditional clearcutting from its lands focusing on partial harvest methods throughout the forest. MRC uses a special harvest prescription called "Variable Retention" to restore tanoak dominated stands back to redwood and Douglas-fir forests. Variable retention harvesting retains between 10% and 50% of the original stand in pockets of untouched trees and dispersed trees across the stand. On well-stocked conifer stands, MRC uses "Selection" silviculture, typically retaining 50% of the pre-harvest stocking. Since its inception, MRC has utilized "Selection" when possible.

OLD GROWTH PROTECTION:

MRC has an old growth protection policy which protects 105 acres of 7 distinct "never-harvested" old growth stands in addition to retaining all individual trees meeting MRC's old growth definition (see Key Policies – Old Growth section on this website for additional information). MRC was one of the first large industrial landowners to have a comprehensive and ecologically driven old growth protection policy.

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 as MRC gradually brings forest stands back to the preferred balance of conifers and hardwood. Moreover, in keeping with Forest Stewardship Council principles, MRC 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. MRC foresters closely evaluate each forest stand before and after harvesting to determine if and where herbicides are required.

STREAM RESTORATION:

Since its inception, MRC has completed multiple stream restoration projects resulting in the control of 775,000 cubic yards of sediment. This represents approximately 77,500 dump truck loads of soil where threat of entering a local stream has been eliminated. MRC and our funding partners have contributed \$14,700,000 to this effort. These restoration projects have also resulted in the removal of 30 barriers to salmonid migration, restoring or enhancing 19 miles of salmonid habitat in various streams across our forestlands.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS:

In early 2001, MRC completed its first conservation easement; a "forever wild" protection of 90 acres of mature redwood forest in the town of Comptche, California.

In mid-2005, MRC sold approximately 3,400 acres of forestland in Sonoma County to California State Parks (who funded the sale with a coalition of several non-profit groups). In addition, MRC completed another "forever wild" protection of an additional 500 acres in Sonoma County.

MRC's Next Stewardship Initiative**IMPROVED WILDLIFE AND FISH HABITAT:**

Beginning in 2000, MRC's resource staff has been meeting on a regular basis with wildlife biologists, fish biologists, botanists, geologists and other forest scientists to discuss habitat targets for various species and their impact on operating practices. MRC has nearly completed process of developing a property-wide "Habitat Conservation Plan" (HCP) combined with a "Natural Communities Conservation Plan" (NCCP), as well as a "Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report" (PTEIR). These plans, although voluntary, are being developed with technical input from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Department of Fish & Game and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Together, MRC and the State and Federal agencies involved believe these MRC plans will provide greater long-term protection for listed as well as non-listed species because of their comprehensive landscape-wide approach as compared to the project by project piecemeal approaches resulting from current regulation. Structured input from interested members of the public is a key component to the development of these plans.